



Alcoholic found hiding in kennel after harassing wife

DRUNK HUSBAND IN THE DOGHOUSE

Report by John Scott

A HUSBAND was literally in the doghouse after alcohol abuse wrecked his nine-year marriage, a judge heard.

Police found Brett Saunders hiding in a kennel in the back garden of the matrimonial home in Coseley.

He had breached a non-molestation order banning him from visiting the home in Davies Avenue, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. The 44-year-old, who had been ordered out of the property after assaulting his wife while drunk last September, had got back in touch with her at Easter but had sent her alarming texts, explained Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting.

Police were called to the house on May 25 and found him in the dog kennel, continued the prosecutor. They removed Saunders and sent him on his way but he returned four hours later, prompting another call for help to the officers. He was then arrested, and discovered to be armed with a knife.

He was so drunk he remembered little about his movements but claimed to be carrying the weapon for his own protection, it was said.

The family court issued a non-molestation order banning him from visiting the address but he was seen outside the property by a neighbour on June 27. His wife was not at home at the time but police found him passed out in the garden.

Custody

He was charged with breaking the terms of the court order and was remanded in custody for a month. This had done him 'a power of good' by weaning him off alcohol, said Mr Oliver Woolhouse, defending.

The lawyer continued: "He had a troubled youth but remained offence free for 23 years until last September when his drinking triggered an assault that led to the break down of his relationship.

Saunders, of Old Hall Close, Amblecote, admitted possession of a lock knife, harassing his wife and breaking the terms of the order. He was given a nine month jail term suspended for two years with a 16-week curfew and was made subject of a restraining order for three years.

Judge Simon Ward said: "You were making a misery of your wife's life by coming round drunk and harassing her."

DISCOVER THE CRUEL WORLD OF EDWARDIAN CREDIT



Not an easy character to bargain with, the Edwardian pawnbroker has arrived at the Black Country Living Museum

MEET the pawnbroker, a new character at the Black Country Living Museum who will reveal the cruel world of Edwardian loans.

A spokesperson for the Tipton Road attraction said: "Pawnbrokers were a form of cheap credit for the working classes of the Black Country before state benefits were available.

"So we are using objects like the set of teeth – they're real teeth, too – to show our visitors that it wasn't unusual for people to pawn

such items during hard times. We know that some people would pawn their teeth on the Monday and pick them back up on Saturday so they could eat their Sunday roast!

"We've refreshed our first person interpretation of the building so that it tells the stories of the people who fell on hard times to our summer visitors. It will be manned by a character full time throughout the summer holidays."

Prior to the Second World War, before widespread state benefits, pawnshops allowed people in society to raise or obtain capital to bolster their income when work was slack.

The front room of the pawnbroker's shop at the popular Dudley museum, housed in a pair of cottages originally from Himley, displays unredeemed pledges – or you could enter the panelled pledge room where the hard bargaining took place.

ACCIDENT

Man hurt in fall from rail station platform

A MAN fell between a platform and a train after being taken ill at Coseley railway station on Monday.

Trains were halted for around two hours from 5.30pm when the emergency services reached the man and he was treated for a head injury. He was taken to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. West Midlands Ambulance Service said on Twitter: "Ambulance staff are treating a man who's been injured after falling between the platform and a train at Coseley Station after what was described as a medical incident."

DEVELOPMENT

Old police station has found a buyer

THE former Stourbridge police station, which partly dates back to the Victorian era, has been sold.

Commercial property company GVA have confirmed the sale of the site on New Road but it is not currently being disclosed how much the building sold for, or who it has been bought by.

Wollaston and town councillor Nick Barlow said: "It is right for conversion, whether that is offices or apartments."

COLLISION

Boy, 12, badly injured in motorcycle crash

A BOY aged 12 was taken to hospital in a critical condition after a crash involving a stolen motorbike.

The collision involving a motorcycle and car took place in Daisy Street, in Coseley, outside the Asda store, shortly before 5.30pm on Monday.

Paramedics found the boy, who was the pillion passenger on the motorbike, in critical condition. Police said the rider of the motorbike, which is believed to be stolen, fled the scene. A 29-year-old man was later arrested on suspicion of theft and causing injury by dangerous driving.

INSIDE MOTORS NEW REG SPECIAL



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Families hope to top 100,000 signatures



Stabbed – Ryan Passey

THEY were both innocent young men on nights out with friends – but both suffered the same horrific fate.

Reagan Asbury was stabbed in the neck during fighting between rival boxing fans outside Walsall Town Hall last October.

Ryan Passey was knifed in the chest during a fracas in the former Chicago's nightclub in Stourbridge a year ago, with the anniversary of the tragedy passing on Monday this week.

Both families then went through the emotional torment of enduring long trials, which finally ended without murder convictions.

In 19-year-old Reagan's case, Tyrone Andrew was cleared of murder, but found guilty of manslaughter and jailed for 14 years.

And in 24-year-old Ryan's case, Kobe Murray, 19, of The Broadway, Dudley, was cleared of murder and manslaughter.

A memorial match for Ryan

will take place between Wolves All-Stars and a 'Justice for Ryan' team on September 30.

The event will be held at Stourbridge FC and will be preceded by a demonstration against knife crime.

The family also want the law changed to allow victim's families to appeal against jury rulings.

A petition, as a result of their campaign, has almost 20,000 signatures.

If it reaches 100,000, their cause will get debated in Parliament.

Now, the family of Reagan have added their names to the online signature list.

Reagan's sister, 24-year-old Elysia, said: "There must be an opportunity to appeal against a jury's ruling."

"When a case is so serious it cannot be left to one chance." To sign the petition, go to change.org/p/justice-for-ryan-ryan-s-law

Nothing will fill gap left by death of my brother – Elysia, 24

THE heartbroken sister of Reagan Asbury says 'nothing will ever be enough' to fill the gap left by the death of her brother.

Elysia, aged 24, said: "My family and I will have to live with the devastating consequences of Tyrone Andrew's careless and brutal actions for the rest of our lives. Reagan isn't coming back and that's something we'll never be able to get over."

"My brother was a remarkable character. You always felt his presence when he entered into a room – always laughing, joking, always had a smile on his face, and so calm. He was wise beyond his years."

"Even though I'm his older sister I used to go to him for advice."

"He had a positive impact on anyone he came into contact with."

She said the impact on the whole family had been devastating.

"There's been a void in our life that will be there for the rest of our lives," she said.

Culture

"It will always be empty. In our house, his car is still on the drive, I walk past his bedroom, his coat is hanging up in the hallway, his shoes – it just feels so fresh and that actually he's going to come back through the door any minute – that's how it feels."

Elysia urged people to stop carrying knives: "It wrecks lives, it wrecks communities."

For some reason people think they need to leave the house with a knife. I don't know where that comes from. I don't know whether it's the culture that needs to change, I don't know whether it's society's attitude that needs to change, I don't know if it's the legal system, if it's tougher sentences."

I don't know what needs to change but something needs to be done because young people are carrying knives now and people don't seem to be listening or abiding by the law."

"That's something that I will concentrate on and campaign for – to stop."

She added: "Reagan had a positive impact on every single person he came into contact with, and will continue to do so. His legacy will live on."



Elysia Asbury

I want justice for my Reagan, says mother

Report by Alex Ross

'A PARAMEDIC looked at me – the look a mum would give to another mum, I knew it was bad then'.

Fighting back tears Reagan Asbury's heartbroken mother has spoken out for the first time since her young son was stabbed to death as trouble broke out after a boxing match in the Black Country.



Reagan Asbury

Helen Kirwan and the rest of the family were hoping to raise a glass to seeing justice done for 19-year-old Reagan following the trial of his killer Tyrone Andrew.

But the jury cleared the 22-year-old drug dealer, of St Helens Street, Derby, of murder instead finding him guilty of manslaughter and sentencing him to 14 years in prison. He could be out in seven years.

Appeal

The verdict has rocked Reagan's family – including his father Julian and sisters Elysia and Fharan – who had all been expecting a sentence of at least 25 years for Andrew.

His determined mother says the fight for justice now goes on for her son – a former Ormiston Sheffield Academy pupil – who was knifed in the neck from behind.

She and her family now want a change of law to allow an appeal against the jury's decision to clear killer Andrew of murder. The 48-year-old, said: "Something went seriously wrong. We are all overwhelmed. He



Reagan's girlfriend Georgia Seedhouse, mother Helen Kirwan, father Julian and his sisters, Elysia, 24, and Fharan, 14

admitted putting the knife in Reagan's neck."

Miss Kirwan last saw her son alive, leaving their Pelsall home to watch the boxing match featuring local fighter Luke Paddock on October 14.

Trouble erupted outside the town hall after the bout between Paddock and opposing fighter Derby-based Myron Mills's fans.

A seven-week trial at Birmingham Crown Court saw chilling footage of Andrew creeping up behind his victim 'like an animal stalking prey' before knifing him in the neck. Reagan's mother received a call from her sister, also at the event, telling her that her son was hurt.

She rushed to the scene with Julian. She said: "I did think he was

hurt, but not in that way and when I got there they [paramedics] were already working on him."

"The paramedics did that much CPR it was unreal. A paramedic looked at me – the look a mum would give to another mum, I knew it was bad then." She added: "God must have taken him – he got taken out of life so quickly."

They had heard claims from Andrew, who fled the country after the attack, that he was acting in self-defence while trying to get away from a 'racist mob'.

Reagan's sister Elysia, 24, said: "We want the right to appeal for a retrial."

"We genuinely thought, because of knife crime going up, that the case

would make an example, we thought we would be walking out that court room with him (Andrew) getting at least a 25-year sentence. Not that he would be out in seven years."

Under current law, convicted offenders can appeal over jury's rulings and sentences, but victims and their families cannot.

Meanwhile, Reagan's football jacket and boots are hanging in the conservatory, his car parked in the garden and the towel he left after his last shower, untouched.

The teenager's home, a converted garage in the family's back garden in Pelsall, is as it was the fateful evening he left to watch a boxing match.

"I can't clean anything, because I'm scared I'll wash him away," says his mother Helen, surrounded by framed pictures of her popular son.

"I feel like he should still be coming to walk through the door in any moment."

Reagan had played for his football team, Pelsall United where he had overcome his fear of taking penalties, scoring the winning spot kick in a victory for his team.

He returned home beaming. And later he got ready to go out.

He was last seen by his mother getting into his girlfriend Georgia's brother's car, smiling from ear to ear. But later things would go very wrong.

Declan Kemp-Francis, 23, of Derby, was acquitted of violent disorder but found guilty of assisting Andrew by driving him to Derby. Ryandeep Sidhu, 22, also from Derby, was found guilty of assisting Andrew by taking the knife. Both were jailed for 30 months.

Reagan's father Julian, aged 51, said of the jury's verdict: "It felt like Reagan's life meant nothing."

"We can't accept that. The case gives the green light for knife crime."

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Nightmare neighbour zone should be created

A SANDWELL councillor has called for nightmare neighbours to be housed in one area – and away from ‘nice streets’.

Council bosses want new tenants to sign ‘good behaviour’ contracts to help prevent incidents of abuse, crime and intimidation.

The new conditions were explained at a meeting of the authority’s Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board last week, following a call from Councillor Maria Crompton for problem families to be housed together.

The meeting was told there were 3,018 incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to police and the borough council last year, of which 426 were investigated further.

Abusive

The new tenancy condition is part of a series of measures to crack down on problems which range from abusive language to threats and intimidation.

Calling for abusive neighbours to be put in one area, Councillor Crompton said: “You can have a street where families have been living for 30 or 40 years with no problems. Then an abusive family, who have been thrown out from elsewhere, move in and ruin the area.”

She added: “If you have been thrown out because of anti-social behaviour, you should not be going into nice streets.

“I would rather that we had all the problems in one place than wreck those we have no problems with.”

Alan Caddick, director of housing, said officers were now carrying out follow-up visits and checking on tenants in an attempt to prevent problems emerging.

He added: “One of the things we are doing is renewing tenancy agreements and putting in a good behaviour contract, so everyone who signs up to a property with us will be expected to follow a good neighbour policy.

“We then need to do more work following that up and ensuring it is abided by.”

In addition, each of Sandwell’s six towns will have a designated officer to deal with incidents plus a borough-wide anti-social behaviour manager is being recruited to drive forward improvements.

Delays warning

MOTORISTS are being warned that they will face delays as a Black Country road is closing for more than a week.

Springfield Lane, in Rowley Regis, is closed for 24-hours a day from this week and is not expected to re-open until next Friday, August 17.

‘Sunlight’ shed fire spreads to homes



One of the damaged homes in Halesowen

AN Halesowen resident has had to be rehomed after a severe shed blaze spread to two properties.

Firefighters rushed to the blaze on Bassnage Road, which started as a result of refracted light.

Four crews from Haden Cross Fire, Brierley Hill Fire and Bournebrook Fire worked to tackle the fire at around 2.30pm on Sunday.

The incident left one property so badly damaged its occupant needed to be rehomed, while one man received oxygen therapy for smoke inhalation but turned down further treatment.

A West Midlands Fire spokesman said: “It was an incident involving a fire spreading from a wooden shed. It spread to two houses. Crews used three hose reel jets and one main jet. Gas and electrics were isolated.

“A council representative was requested and one occupant was rehomed.

“West Midlands Ambulance were in attendance and the fire was distinguished at 15.39pm.”

The fire left pieces of wood and bushes destroyed and the outside of one of the homes smoke damaged.

Firefighters issued a warning on social media in the aftermath of the incident, saying: “Items that reflect sunlight such as mirror, crystal balls, glass bottles or paper weights should never be left by windows or in direct sunlight – otherwise this could be the result.”

Meanwhile, dozens of firefighters tackled a large blaze on glassland close to woods near Stourbridge on Saturday.

At its height, eight crews attended in a bid to quell the flames on land off Lawnswood Road, near Stourton.

Seaside fun suddenly turned into tragedy

A FAMILY friend of the teenager from Dudley who died following a sea rescue in Wales has spoken of the moments leading up to the tragedy.

Rebecca Ray, of Coseley, said she initially thought cries for help were shrieks of laughter.

They had just arrived at Tywyn when 16-year-old Blake Ward and two other teenagers got into difficulties in the sea.

The group had travelled to the beach last Tuesday in five cars and the older youngsters had gone on ahead while the rest of the party unpacked.

Mrs Ray said: “They were only five minutes ahead of us. When we got to the beach I could hear them shouting and at first I thought it was screams of laughter.

“Then I said to my sister ‘Are they in trouble?’ We dumped everything and ran over to the rocks.”

Her brother Michael Payne jumped into the sea to try and rescue them with a lifebuoy and then helped to drag them to safety.

Blake was given CPR at the scene by a Royal National Lifeboat Institution volunteer before being airlifted to Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool but he was found to have suffered extensive brain damage and died on Saturday.

His mother and father, who were not part of the holiday group, were at his hospital bedside. Blake, who had just left Hillcrest School and Community College in Netherton, after sitting his GCSEs, was the boyfriend of Mrs Ray’s daughter Stephanie.

The other teenagers who were rescued, Brandon Harrison, also 16, and 14-year-old Michelle Evans, were taken to Bangor Hospital for treatment but have since been discharged.



Blake Ward

Record smashed at transplant games



Martin Searle, who has had two transplants, took part in the Transplant Games snooker and darts contests

THERE was a record-breaking opening ceremony for the British Transplant Games in Birmingham.

The occasion secured itself a place in the Guinness World Record book when more than 700 arrived on Thursday at the International Convention Centre.

Martin Searle, aged 50, from Halesowen, who has had two life-saving kidney transplants, won a bronze medal competing in snooker on the opening day.

Mr Searle, who also competed in darts, described the games as having a ‘massive-friendly atmosphere’. He said: “It was absolutely

brilliant – 438 people had been the previous record and, counting everyone that had registered, we smashed the record. There were 732 of us. We even had a visit from Jasper Carrott.

“It all helps to raise the awareness of organ donors. It is important to get that message out.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Homes plan at gym is opposed

CAMPAIGNERS have criticised plans for dozens of homes and a gym to be built beside a busy road in Quarry Bank.

More than 50 objections have been made over the proposal for the site of Fitness4Less on Thorns Road. The application would see 14 apartments and 19 townhouses built on the site, next to a route that carries 24,000 vehicles a day. One of the nearby residents said the development would pose an ‘increase’ to risk of life by placing family homes by such a busy route.

Applicant Fitness4Less say the existing gym requires ‘significant redevelopment’.

Cemetery proposal for green site

PLANS for a new cemetery on open green space in Rowley Regis have been lodged.

The planning application for the land in Powke Lane has been submitted to Sandwell Council and is located behind houses, which face the crematorium. It is currently open green space for residents.

A design and access statement stated that there was a need for further cemetery space as the current provision has only got five years to go before being at capacity. But residents say it is a haven for wildlife.

Butcher shuts after 116 years

ONE of Sedgley’s oldest family businesses has shut after 116 years.

C D Field Butchers was originally started in 1902 by Daniel Field and in recent years it has been run by his great-grandson, also Daniel.

The shop in High Street, next to the Red Lion pub, closed its doors for the last time on Saturday.

The award-winning business had been struggling to compete with supermarkets in the area.

At one time the family had a chain of shops including Dudley, Upper Gornal, Brierley Hill and Kingswinford.

Man arrested after canal bridge crash

A SUSPECTED drink-driver was arrested after a car carrying two young boys crashed into a bridge in Wordsley.

The children, aged four and six, were both taken to hospital as a precaution, while a woman suffered a suspected broken leg in the incident shortly before 4pm on Thursday. A 28-year-old man was arrested.

Serious damage was caused to the car and the canal bridge on Brierley Hill Road.

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COUNTY NEWS

Red Lemons back with celebrity fans

ONE of the most popular Black Country bands of the 1980s are getting back together for another of their popular reunion concerts in Stourbridge – and they will be bringing along special guests and original fans TV celebrities Adrian Chiles and Suzi Perry.

R&B group the Red Lemon Electric Blues Band, who built up a huge local following some 30 years ago, will play their 'spiritual home' with a gig at Stourbridge Town hall on September 29. Tickets cost £24 (plus booking fee) via 0844 844 0444, online from www.ticketmaster.co.uk or from Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Third 'can't afford to pay upfront'

MORE than a third of people say they cannot afford to pay for items or bills in one go, a survey has found.

Some 36 per cent of people say they do not have enough funds to pay bills upfront in a single lump sum, Nationwide Home Insurance found.

Despite the potential to make savings by paying that way, nearly a fifth of people surveyed said no amount of money saving would encourage them to pay their bills in one go, rising to nearly a quarter of over-55s.

Ryanair flying high despite the setbacks

BUDGET airline Ryanair saw passenger numbers rise four per cent to 13.1 million last month.

The airline, which operates flights from Birmingham International Airport, said that its aeroplanes were 97 per cent full on average.

The rise came despite pilot and cabin crew strikes, adverse weather and air traffic control staff shortages which caused more than 1,000 flight cancellations in July.

Brave Dan's booster is out of this world

A BRAVE cancer patient from Dudley has touched the hearts of many – even some that are out of this world.

Dan Thomas is battling a rare cancer armed with a positive attitude which has not gone unnoticed, even in space.

Russian cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev was so impressed when he heard about the Dudley man's positivity that he sent him a message from the International Space Station.

He called Mr Thomas, who has sarcomatoid carcinoma, a 'tough man' and admired him for encouraging people to live their lives to the full.

He said: "Hello there, my name is Oleg Artemyev, I am a Russian cosmonaut. Your good spirit and enthusiasm in the fight against cancer has reached the port of the International Space Station."

Energy

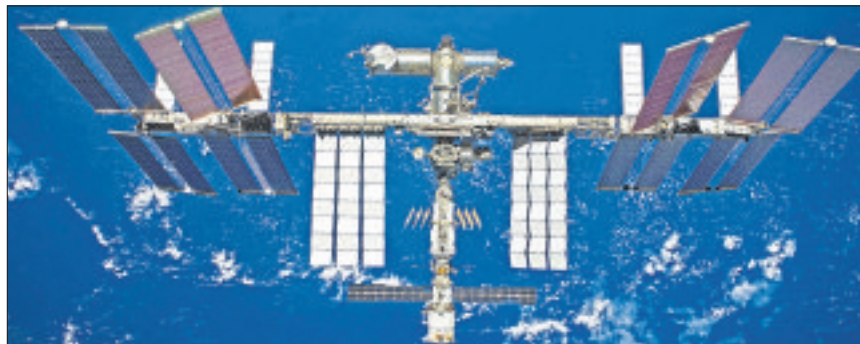
"You are a tough man. You should keep going and thank you for sharing your energy and positive attitude."

"You encourage people to live their real life, to enjoy every minute of it, to be strong and happy. One has to fight for the future."

"Say hello to your parents and I like your Hawaiian shirt."

He then showed him the impressive view from the space station of the Earth and wished him good luck.

The video came as a surprise to the 32-year-old who documents his journey from his YouTube account called Pee-WeeToms. He said: "It is amazing. I just want to thank everyone who made that possible. "It has really made my day, well made a few days of mine actually."



The International Space Station in Earth orbit, more than 200 miles above the planet



Dan Thomas has won a following for his videos



Cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev sends greetings to Dan

Four men acquitted over baseball bat attack

FOUR young men have been found not guilty of attacking a 22-year-old with baseball bats and a machete after he allegedly 'put his nose into somebody else's business.'

Joshua O'Shaughnessy was injured after being cornered at a store in Priory Road, Dudley on November 28, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

He blamed 18-year-old Tyler Ward, Brandon Ward, aged 20, 22-year-old Jack Nicholls and a 17-year-old youth too young to be identified, who all denied involvement.

Mr O'Shaughnessy was taken to hospital where his wounds were treated but he overstated the number of stitches they required, telling the jury it was 20 when the medical report stated eight stitches had been required, the court heard.

Cameras

Under cross examination he admitted wrongly identifying Brandon and Tyler Ward as being on CCTV images taken by cameras on nearby shops.

Miss Siobhan Collins, representing the 17-year-old defendant, told Mr O'Shaughnessy: "You are changing who is who."

He agreed: "I have been mistaken. I don't know why."

He also conceded he had not been able to find Nicholls on the footage and had not seen either Tyler Ward or the 17-year-old hit him.

Brandon and Tyler Ward, both of Davis Avenue, Tipton, Nicholls, of Broad Street, Kidderminster, and the 17-year-old were all found not guilty of wounding with intent, wounding, affray and threatening with either a blade or an offensive weapon.

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Families are opposing rehab centre

CAMPAIGNERS were left 'gob-smacked' after plans were officially lodged to turn a former care home into a drugs and alcohol rehabilitation unit.

Members of the Coseley Focus group have vowed to oppose Expectations UK's bid to see New Bridge House undergo a major refurbishment, with scores of objections already coming in.

The building, on Bayer Street, Coseley, would transform from its former use of a care home into a 65-room hostel and would accommodate men over the age of 25 under new plans – excluding those with arson convictions or offences of a serious sexual nature.

Tony Sheldon, of the Coseley Focus group, said: "We were gobsmacked at the size of it, 65 rooms and there is going to be potentially two to a room. We have only got until August 22 to object. They say that they want a meeting with the public to reassure us. We are going to object against it the same way we did against the plans for the Budden Road travellers' site."

Worry

One resident said they would feel unsafe and would not allow their children to play outside if the rehab centre got the go-ahead, another said Coseley was already struggling with rising crime.

A statement attached to the application states that once refurbished there would be managers on site with 24-hour staff and 24/7 CCTV operation plus approved security.

Other facilities planned include dining areas on each level, a gym and an information technology room.

Expectations UK said they were hoping to open New Bridge House by January 2019. Marc Blanchette, chair of trustees at Expectations UK, said: "We have agreed to hold two community consultation sessions in Coseley in mid-August to ally any concerns the public may have."

Daughter's tribute to D-Day veteran who has died aged 94

Crowds go quackers at charity duck race



The Black Country Duck Race at The Tenth Lock pub in Brierley Hill was attended by cheering crowds

BACK for a second year, the Black Country Duck Race, was held at The Tenth Lock Pub in Brierley Hill, and big crowds meant it raised lots of money for Mary Stevens Hospice.

More than 600 rubber ducks were entered and the event raised £5,000 for the hospice and its work helping families from across the Black Country.

Excitement mounted on the canal-side on Sunday as the numbered ducks

were hurled into the water and started to float in the direction of the finish line where crowds of onlookers urged them on.

Prize

Most of the ducks stayed in a bunch in the middle of the canal but as groups broke away the spectators went quackers. The ducks had been bought for £3-a-head as part of the charity fundraiser and many of their owners,

competing for a £100 top prize, turned up to cheer them on.

There was some ducking and diving as firefighters gave the ducks a helpful push with their hoses.

The canal antics were the highlight of a family fun day at the pub.

Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundraising at the hospice, said: "It's events like this that make such a difference to our patients. It was a spectacular community event."

AN EMOTIONAL tribute has been paid to a Black Country D-Day veteran who, at just 20-years-old, was one of the first to land in Normandy.

Dennis Bolter, who served in the Royal Marines and is noted as one of Stourbridge's last surviving D-Day veterans, died aged 94 after a short illness. His only child, daughter Mary Walker, aged 65, from Stourport-on-Severn, paid tribute to an 'amazing' and 'generous' father, who was part of the No 47 Commando Group.

Ms Walker said: "He was an amazing father. I have two sons and he was a wonderful granddad to them and a great-grandfather."

"He was very kind and very generous. He had a very happy and healthy life up until he was unwell three weeks ago."

"Dad enjoyed his last years and went to Normandy every year for the last six years too."

"He was a Green Beret and landed on D-Day. Every year he went back, and he went in June this year as well."

Award

Mr Bolter, a long-term resident of The Broadway in Norton, was awarded the Légion d'honneur three years ago by the French authorities.

The award is the highest French order of merit for military and civil merits. "He was very proud of that," Mary said.

"He has lots of medals but that one he was very proud of."

She added it was 'humbling' to see how many lives he had touched.

She added: "When I told the neighbours they cried, when I told his day care centre they cried and when I told his cleaner she cried."

"My father's neighbours have two



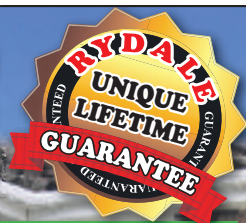
Former commando Dennis Bolter fought in Normandy aged 20

young children, they loved him so much they cried when we told them. They called him uncle Dennis."

"To me he was just dad. He never talked about the war. It took until he was retired for him to speak about it."

He died on July 27 and his funeral is set for August 30 St Thomas's Church at 10.45am.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Uni needs a reality check on research

OF course, I would never suggest our universities are dumbing down, but could you imagine – even a generation ago – the renowned London School of Economics publishing a piece of research on the Kardashians?

All right, the Kardashians weren't around then, but you get my drift. Anyhow, the esteemed academics say that watching 'materialistic' reality programmes such as Keeping Up With the Kardashians and Made in Chelsea has made Britain a more mean-spirited country, less sympathetic to generous welfare payments.

Now, I've never watched either, but I can't help but think it is more documentaries such as Benefits Street, and their portrayal of feckless layabouts with giant televisions that rub people up the wrong way about the welfare state. As for the Kardashians I would have thought serial benefit claimants were a key component of their target audience.

□□□

MEANWHILE, Alastair Jarvis, the chief of Britain's universities, says it would be 'elitist and regressive' to impose a cap on the number of degree places.

Of course he does. I'm sure he believes everybody, no matter how dim, should have a completely unfettered right to shell out £27,000 in tuition fees over three years.

However, one of the things I learned from my time studying economics is that the value of anything is determined by supply and demand. So, in economic terms, the whole point of university is to get a qualification which is in demand but limited in supply. So if university places are unlimited, that means the degrees are practically worthless.

□□□

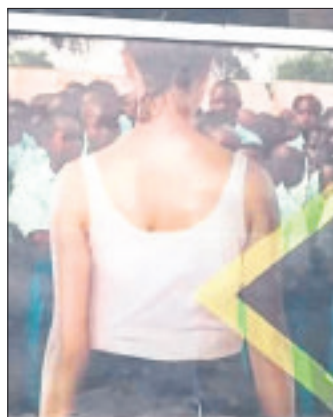
FLY-tipping is one of the great scourges of our time. So you would think that any council crackdown on fly-tipping is a good thing. But you know somebody in local government will prove otherwise.

And it is Waltham Forest Council in Essex, who fined roofer Stuart Gosling £300 for carrying unlicensed waste in his van. And the waste in question? Building rubble? Rusting bedstead? Toxic chemicals?

Well, no, it was a few empty crisp packets left over from his lunch, which he planned to put in the bin. But because he had used the wrong type of bag, he was deemed to have committed an offence.

Great, so now local councils are actually fining people for taking their litter home. Nice work, jobsworths.

Air could turn blue over misuse of parking badges



What next? Wonder was that the billboard was put up in the first place



Jeremy Clarkson – and the list of disgusting things you can find in used cars



Brexit negotiations – and Michel Barnier's continuing struggle with the 'law'

Disabled? You just leapt out of your car!

YOU may have noticed a new crop of stickers appearing in the rear windows of cars. The message goes something like: "No, I don't look disabled - but then you don't look pig-ignorant." These waspish little banners mark the opening salvo in a new phase of Britain's worsening car-parking war. It began some years ago when the suspicion grew that blue badges, supposedly issued only to people with real mobility problems, were being used dishonestly by some able-bodied drivers to use disabled parking places. If you can barely walk, it must be galling to find "your" space taken by someone who leaps out of the car and briskly strides away. From next year, expect more friction as people with "hidden disabilities" such as autism and mental-health issues are granted blue badges, increasing the number from about 2.4 million to four million.

GARDENING corner. Guess how deep the rain penetrated the soil in the garden at Chateau Rhodes after two days of rain? Just two inches. It may look wet but scrape the surface and the dust is down there.

NEWS priorities. No, I can't explain why five deaths in a California wildfire are deemed more important to the news channels than 60 deaths in flooding in India.

I WAS impressed with the BBC reporter, whose name I missed, interviewing a farmer about the drought. Too many hacks work from a script, asking a list of questions like a robot, instead of letting the conversation flow. In this

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



case, it flowed in a heartbeat from misery to joy as the farmer, having described his sub-standard crop, of wheat added "but at least it's better than last year." And then he waxed lyrical about what a washout the summer of 2017 was and how glorious are the sunsets of the summer of 2018. And, yes, his yields might be down 20 per cent but he's got the harvest in earlier than ever and now he's having that rarest of farming events – a holiday. According to the old saying you'll never see a dead donkey or a happy farmer. Well done, Auntie, for finding one of them.

BREXIT may be tangled but it is happening. I passed a delivery lorry piled high with new cars and not one of those cars had a number plate with the EU symbol.

I HAVE done the deed and bought another old banger, ending a long line of diesels and returning to the petrol fold. And I can think of no better example of the term "sod's law" than buying a second-hand vehicle on the very same day that Jeremy Clarkson wrote a column about testing the interiors of used cars.

ACCORDING to Clarkson, the experts examining the old cars found "a thin veneer of mucus, significant traces of faecal matter and

enough dried blood to suggest someone had been beheaded in there." Plus other stuff unsuitable for a family newspaper. Having read Clarkson's piece, I gave my new pride and joy another good scrub. Yeah, I'm sure it's just mud . . .

AND back to the Brexit negotiations and Michel Barnier's continuing struggle with the law. Not with the principle of the law, that is, but the pronunciation. Like so many French who speak otherwise excellent English, his version of "law" comes out sounding like "low." Which is a bit awkward if you're profession is trying to reconcile EU law with English law.

THE French at least have no trouble with the English name for a small settlement. That particular heffalump trap is the one that catches Germans who, in the middle of delivering a word-perfect speech in English, will suddenly refer to a village.

WE Brits are, of course, the worst linguists in Europe and are duly sniggered at by all. A tip: never, ever let a French person hear you say "cul-de-sac."

THE billboard that caused such a fuss at Wolverhampton University, showing a young white woman facing a group of black children with the motto: "If you want to explore new worlds. Start here" fell straight into the white-saviour trap and was duly denounced in a twitter-storm of academic outrage. The wonder was that the billboard was put up in the first place. Whatever next? A poem by Rudyard Kipling?

TALKING POINT



Parking: 999 staff are not above law

ATTACKS on medical staff – both verbal and physical – together with damage caused to ambulances are, sadly, becoming all too frequent.

Two high-profile cases include a woman in Stoke-on-Trent who left an abusive note on an ambulance parked outside her home while medics attended an emergency, and one in Birmingham which saw a paramedic threatened and abused while treating a sick patient. Last month crews were attacked with bricks while responding to a false claim that a 13-year-old girl was in cardiac arrest.

For any member of the emergency services, simply carrying out their duties, this kind of behaviour is sick, abhorrent, and one can only hope that those responsible are never in need of life-saving treatment.

However, much has been made about the ambulance staff given a parking ticket for stopping on double yellow lines while the occupants got out to buy a drink.

The warden responsible has been reprimanded and the firm he works for, Euro Parking Services, suspended from carrying out patrols by the landowners. The firm did apologise and admitted the ticket should not have been issued.

But am I the only one thinking the warden was right, and that he too was only doing his job? He argued that an ambulance should only park on double yellow lines in an emergency situation.

The medics, overworked I agree, needed a drink after hours on the road. No problem. Staff said the vehicle was too wide for regular bays and did not want to use a disabled space. An admirable stance. And I know that all NHS staff, and Armed Services personnel, perform heroic tasks. But does this mean they should be allowed to act above the law? Does it give them the right to park where they want even when not on emergency calls?

After all, if it was any ordinary Joe, there would be no extenuating circumstances.

The British Parking Association's code of contact advises its members to "respect the needs of the emergency services" and allow them to carry out their duties without enforcement action being taken against them. The code states: "This means that you must not issue parking charge notices to liveried vehicles being used for operational fire, police or ambulance purposes."

There is a danger here, though, that this could lead to more confrontation. While I respect and admire our medics for the job they do and would never condone attacks or abuse, I think there should be more consideration on their part, too.

MARK SHIPP

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A Dudley tennis legend

LAWN tennis was originated in a back garden in Birmingham, and the region boasts two Wimbledon champions, Ann Jones from Birmingham and Dorothy Round from Dudley.

I want to write about Dorothy Round, she won two single Wimbledon titles and three mixed doubles Wimbledon titles (two with Fred Perry). She lived at 25, Grange Road, Dudley, when she got married moved to Cedar Gardens, Kinver.

A life size statue in bronze stands in Priory Park, Dudley, overlooking the tennis courts, there is also a portrait in oils, which was painted by a Dudley artist, which is now part of the collection owned by Dudley Museum of Art.

Dorothy was a committed Christian and a Methodist Sunday School teacher; she refused to play tennis on Sunday.

Dorothy's last appearance at Wimbledon was in 1939, but by this time

she had put tennis behind her for family life, yet she did not give up tennis entirely she worked as a coach and journalist.

She also wrote two books, Modern Lawn Tennis and Tennis for Girls.

Dorothy died in November 1982 in Kidderminster.

Her memory will live on forever, especially here in the Black Country.

MR T CADMAN
Wordsley

Why no drones on display?

TO celebrate the 100th anniversary of the RAF many different types of aircraft flew over London, modern jets like the Tornado, F-35, Typhoon, Hawks, Chinook and Puma helicopters and everybody's favourite World War 2 war-birds Spitfires, Hurricanes and Lancasters... but no Reaper killer drones on show?

Mr Geoffrey Wellum DFC, the youngest Spitfire pilot who defended Britain in the air from the Nazis passed away at the grand old age of 96, a true hero.

With 15 RAF bases earmarked for closure sadly it's looking like the RAF will become keyboard warriors that kill people whilst skulking in air conditioned bunkers 2,000 miles away from any chance of danger.

There is no honour or glory in killing people from thousands of miles away, where the only real risk is that their cocoa may go cold.

G E FANTHOM
Swindon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Debt could lead to another crisis

ONE of the factors behind the 2008 financial crisis was risky lending by banks and credit card companies to people who could not always cover the repayments.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the amount of household debt is again getting out of hand. This shows that greed has won out over financial responsibility for some lenders.

Credit card bills soon get out of hand and many people's ambition is to pay off that mounting debt. It is for this reason that many organisations are calling for credit card debts below a certain level to be written off, lest the spiralling household debt should trigger another financial crisis.

R TABERNER
Tividale

Dragged into the unknown

HAVING now read the letter from your correspondent Robert Perry (Chronicle Letters, July 26), I must add my full support to his comments.

Only 37 per cent of the electorate voted to leave, many I am sure on the false promises offered. So why are the majority - 63 per cent - being dragged into the unknown?

It was a flawed and too simplistic referendum brought about only in an attempt to patch up the Conservative Party, which has failed.

I like most people still have no idea if Brexit is the right move and no evidence has been forthcoming after two years to support the leavers' claims.

We appear to be heading for a poor or no deal which was not the referendum choice, so at some future point the electorate must be given the facts and a say.

JOHN DUNN
Stourbridge

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Police fail to answer call on gifts data

WEST Midlands Police has refused to reveal information regarding gifts and gratuities, despite a Freedom of Information request being made.

A FOI lodged by the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) on July 5 requested a full list of gifts, gratuities and hospitality given to police staff between January 2015 and June 2018.

The force previously had similar information under its proactive publication scheme, yet no figures have been published on its website since January 2015.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Under section 22 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already scheduled to be released into the public domain. The information is due to be made available on the following website: <http://foi.west-midlands.police.uk>"

No expected date of publication has been announced and no reason has been given as to why the figures have not been updated more recently than January 2015. The list of gifts, gratuities and hospitality is a record of what has been offered to West Midlands Police officers, by whom and how much they are worth.

The LDRS is appealing the decision.

Student gets work experience in Canada

HALESOWEN College business studies student Joseph Frost is one of just 12 successful applicants who have been given a work experience placement at a law firm's Canadian office.

The 18-year-old made the 4,600-mile trip to Vancouver to work at one of Gowling WLG's Canadian offices, working in marketing, business development, IT and accounts.

Cost of Metro to Brierley Hill has gone up by £33m

Charity nets £10k from football trophy

A FOOTBALL tournament has raised £10,000 for a West Midlands charity. The JW Hunt Cup competition brought in money for sight-loss charity Beacon.

A cheque was given at the charity's Sedgley centre, in Wolverhampton Road East, by JW Hunt Cup president and life-time supporter Alex Hamil MBE.

Beacon Centre CEO Arwyn Jones said: "The JW Hunt Cup has supported us over many decades. We rely on the generosity of the local community through initiatives like this."

Awareness

"I would like to thank everyone on the behalf of Beacon for their kind donations. As well as raising funds the cup is helping increase awareness and helps shine a light on our vital work."

Since its inception, more than 90 years ago, the tournament has helped raise £340,000 for the charity.

Mr Hamil said: "This year's tournament was another huge success. It's great to see such strong community support for the competition. It's a privilege to hand over this cheque to Beacon."

"We have been supporting the charity for over 90 years and since my time I have seen the huge difference they make to the lives of those living with sight loss. I'm already looking forward to the next season and hope to be back here again next year handing over another cheque."



Celebrating charity fundraising achievement

THE projected cost of the Midland Metro line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill has gone up by more than £30 million.

The 11km-long line is currently forecast to cost £343m, according to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) – that's £33m more than initially planned. It is understood the rise is partly down to the cost of acquiring land along the route.

At the same time, the projected cost of another proposed line, between Birmingham and Solihull, has also gone up from £675m to £735m.

At a meeting of the WMCA's investment board, finance director Sean Pearce said he was working hard to bring the projects back under the initial budgets.

Pressure

He said: "There are two schemes at the moment that are demonstrating some cost pressure. One is the metro from Birmingham to Solihull. So it's a scheme that's in a much earlier stage of development, but that shows £60m worth of pressure at the moment, in terms of its budget. The second is the Brierley Hill metro extension, which is showing £33m. So those two are being worked on to bring them back into budget and on schedule."

The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill line is to open in two phases, beginning with Dudley to Wednesbury in 2022, followed by Brierley Hill extension a year later. There will be 17 stops along the route.

Work has already started removing vegetation from disused railway lines which form much of the route. The project has a £207m commitment from the Department of Transport. The WMCA is putting in £103m and the Local Growth Fund £400,000. Last year £7.3m was spent on the scheme and £1.5m so far this financial year.

Grant help for firms on sickness

SMALL firms in the West Midlands are being offered grants of up to £12,000 to help cut sickness levels, which can cost their business up to £250,000 a year in lost productivity.

A new pilot scheme, run by the West Midlands Combined Authority, is offering a toolkit, support, advice and grants for businesses with 20-250 employees, including those in the Black Country. WMCA is hoping to get 148 companies to sign up for the scheme, which could then be rolled out across the region.

Alongside the pilot, businesses can work towards three levels of the Thrive at Work Commitment – bronze, silver and gold. Businesses which show exemplary practice will be eligible for a Wellbeing Award.

Researchers will evaluate how the programme is implemented and interview employees to gauge its effectiveness.

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Lemurs settle into their new home



The lemurs get a bite to eat from keeper Sian-Leigh Simner at their newly-built enclosure at Dudley Zoo

A family of critically-endangered lemurs is settling into a new home at Dudley Zoo. Mum Barbara, dad Bryan, one-year-old Kim and baby Jim, who was born in April, have been moved from Lemur Wood walk-through to their new £25,000 enclosure opposite the chimps.

It comes complete with hammocks made from old coffee sacks, basket feeders, branches which can be hooked into different positions and glass viewing areas.

The new build was designed by curator Richard Brown, who plays a key role in the conservation battle of the vulnerable species.

Dudley Zoo is the studbook holder for the European Endangered Species Programme, with Richard being responsible for recommending exchanges or breeding across more than 50 animal collections. Head of upper primates Pat Stevens said: "The move from Lemur Wood went smoothly and the new enclosure gives the family lots of things to do.

Teenager stabbed woman ten times

A TEENAGE robber stabbed a mother up to ten times while trying to steal her car just moments after she had dropped her child at nursery in Tipton, a court heard.

The teenager, who cannot be named for legal reasons and has now been locked up, had struck a number of times before across the Black Country, even targeting a pregnant woman in Coseley and forcing her to hand over £300.

The Tipton victim had just left her two-year-old at nursery when she was targeted by the 17-year-old thug in Tipton High Street Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The youth, from West Bromwich, drew a knife, grabbing hold of her and saying she would be stabbed if she did not give him the key to her car, explained Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting.

An eye witness to the incident on March 29 at around 7am estimated the attacker delivered up to ten blows as the woman fought back before the robber was chased off by staff from a butchers.

Although her injuries were not life threatening, the woman needed stitches.

By John Scott

Mr Searle revealed: "She thought she might have been killed, suffers flashbacks and has developed a stutter."

The culprit had three days earlier ambushed a man for his Peugeot and stabbed him several times to make him drop the keys. Luckily the victim was wearing heavy clothing. On March 10 he robbed a mother-to-be in Coseley.

The defendant, who had five previous robbery convictions, admitted wounding with intent, two robberies and attempted robbery. He was given six years detention with three years more supervision than usual on release after serving at least two thirds of his sentence.

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Armed police called more than 3,000 times in a year

THE number of police firearms operations across the West Midlands has increased more in just a single year than in any other region in the country.

Figures released by the Home Office show armed police were called to 3,312 incidents in 2017/18 – up 53 per cent from the year before when there were 2,167.

Most of the operations took place in the West Midlands Police force area, where there were 2,421 in 2017/18. In Staffordshire there were 330.

Apprentices at Carillion lose financial help

THE remaining 341 Carillion apprentices will have financial support cut off at the end of this month after being officially released from the company.

The apprentices, who have yet to find new placements, will have their wage support stopped.

There were 1,275 apprentices working at Wolverhampton-based Carillion at the time of its collapse in January.

Since then they continued to be paid by the Official Receiver as they attempted to find new companies. So far 777 have so far found paid roles with new employers in England.

Some 123 are still working with the Construction Industry Training Board to find new employment.

The CITB has pledged to continue providing assistance to apprentices once wage support ends, with weekly contact via social media, access to career events and support with job-seeking skills such as CV preparation.

West Midlands Police spokesman Lara Horsley said: "In the year to March 2017 we saw the number of firearms officers increase by more than half.

"We now have more armed patrol vehicles out and about on the streets of the West Midlands than ever before – and as a result we have the capacity to respond to more incidents."

Across England and Wales, police carried out 18,746 armed operations in 2017/18.

Danger

Officers opened fire on 12 occasions, twice more than the previous year.

Federation chairman Richard Cooke said: "These figures are a salutary reminder of the grave danger our officers face daily policing the streets and doing our best, with ever dwindling resources to keep the people safe. The increase in gun crime is frankly alarming."

"More specialist firearms officers are welcome, but they cannot be everywhere when the majority of unarmed colleagues and the public potentially need them."

"New firearms officers are not new resources, they come at the expense of officer numbers in other areas."

Lenny helps patients feel smiles better



Sir Lenny meeting staff on Ward 1, the kidney ward, at Birmingham Children's Hospital

COMEDIAN and actor Sir Lenny Henry brought a smile to sick children at Birmingham Children's Hospital, as he entertained them with jokes, songs and stories.

The Dudley-born star paid a visit to the hospital to lift spirits among the children, young people and families.

Sir Lenny, who was in the area for the Birmingham City University graduation ceremonies, where he acts as chancellor, took time out of his busy schedule to spend time on Ward 1, the hospital's kidney ward. He met patients, families and staff as well as one of the hospital's charity-funded 'giggle

doctors', Dr Flowerpot, who entertains youngsters in hospital.

"It was inspiring to hear how the hospital's charity works hard to make a real difference to each child and family's experience, allowing youngsters to be kids first and patients second," he said

2 Sisters sells its 'red meat' process sites

FOOD group 2 Sisters, which has chicken processing factories in the West Midlands, has sold its red meat division.

Kepak Group is buying the business and assets of 2 Sisters Red Meat, including four UK production facilities and a cold storage facility in Truro.

The production sites are the beef and lamb processing factories in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, and McIntosh Donald in Portlethen, Scotland, a retail packing factory at Victoria, Cornwall, and a beef processing site in Bodmin, Cornwall.

About 1,700 people are employed by 2 Sisters Red Meat.

The sites, which operate under the brands McIntosh Donald and St Merlyn, were bought by 2 Sisters from Vion in 2013 in a £30 million deal.

The red meat business has since made losses in three of four financial years, and 2 Sisters has been restructuring.

Ranjit Singh Boparan, president of 2 Sisters' parent Boparan Holdings, said: "We have had approaches over the past four years for our red meat operations, and we have been talking to several interested parties during this period."

"But as we always make clear, any sale has to be at the right time with the right buyer."

Beer festival has cider and gin too

THE ninth annual Black Country Beer Festival is being held in Lye, from tonight (Thursday) to Saturday at Lye Cricket Club's Stourbridge Road ground. There will be 86 beers and 40 ciders on offer, plus a gin bar. There will be entertainment each day and cricket on Saturday. Entrance is £10 including glass and £5 voucher.

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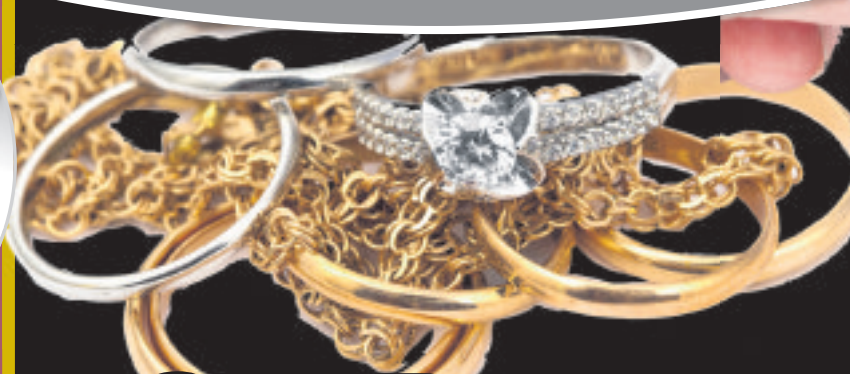
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Now it's all about Eve, pop's bright newcomer

IT'S one thing being told you have talent by your friends and family, but when it's your peers and industry leaders it means a whole lot more.

So when 18-year-old Halesowen singer Eve Pitt took to the stage at the Birmingham Music Awards in May to pick up the Best Pop Act trophy it must have meant something special.

"It was very exciting – fantastic," she says. "I was also nominated for the Rising Star/One To Watch Award and out of about 15 people I came third in the public vote.

"They announced all the names and I listened to all the others and thought I didn't stand a chance. They called out my name and I was flabbergasted."

But it wasn't just a party for Eve that night at the Glee Club. No, the singer/songwriter had her business hat on and wasn't going to let the opportunities slip through her fingers on a night when one of our first Unsigned acts to feature – Sugarthief – took home Best Alternative/Indie Act.

College

"I had done some promo for the event, press launches and stuff. It was all about networking, getting people aware of the event and being a part of it. I was sat on a table with John Taylor from Duran Duran and we had a good chin wag. I spoke to Brian [Travers] from UB40 too, but mostly about football I'm not gonna lie."

It was quite a step up for Eve, who had just finished studying music performance at Stourbridge College and is now preparing to take on songwriting at the British and Irish Modern Music Institute in Digbeth.

"College was a blessing, I've got



Halesowen's Eve Pitt, 18, likes to do things her own way

nothing bad to say about it," she says. "It was a fantastic challenge and the tutors were excellent and supportive.

"My tutor Heather Young was in a band called DRAG [AKA Birmingham punk rockers DressedAsGirl] so she passed on her help. She was so supportive and honest, if I pitched an idea and she didn't like it she would say 'no'."

Eve has been writing for 'half a decade', she was a young teenager when she first put her thoughts to paper.

"Looking back, some of that is not anything like myself," she laughs.

"I'm not ashamed of it, it shaped me as a musician, but some of it is pretty depressing and hopefully that remains under the carpet for ever. I do like to throw some of my early songs into live sets, just not all of them."

Style-wise, Eve points to The Streets, Lily Allen and Frank Turner as major influences, as well as being a massive fan of musician, activist and philanthropist Chance The Rapper.

Eve released debut album Animated Soul this year, which led to the award. It can be heard on Spotify or Soundcloud, or check out @evepittmusic

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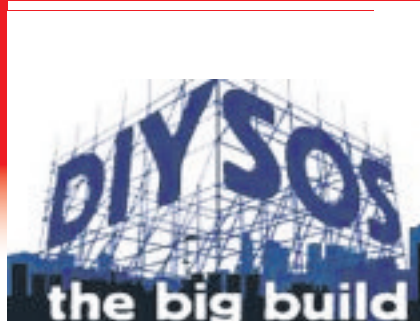
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14 Addict stole patrol car after threat with needle

A WANTED man who lunged at police officers in Dudley with a syringe before stealing their patrol car has been jailed for almost four years.

Motorists had to swerve to avoid being hit by Andrew Gill as he fled through congested Dudley streets. He later tried to throw himself off a bridge but was rescued by officers.

The 30-year-old had been arrested and handcuffed in the town's High Street last December for a breach of his licence conditions. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. But when in the back of a patrol car heading for Oldbury police station, the drug addict became 'aggressive and agitated', said Ms Katie Fox, prosecuting.

He told them he was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C, reached into an inside pocket and produced a syringe with the threat: "I've got a dirty needle covered in blood – if you don't let me out, I'll stab you with it." In a struggle the keys of the vehicle were dropped and snatched by Gill who, despite being sprayed with something similar to pepper spray, got into the driver's seat and sped away.

Jump

He drove erratically up Birmingham Road, carrying out a hand-brake turn as he headed towards a junction with drivers having to take evasive action. The car was tracked to a petrol station and Gill, who had fled to a 35ft-high bridge overlooking Duncan Edwards Way, was restrained by police as he tried to jump off.

The court heard he had a string of convictions involving 54 offences, mainly for dishonesty but also including firearms.

Mr Jason Patel, defending, said Gill's offending was driven by his addiction to drugs. He was genuinely remorseful for his behaviour that day which was as an act of 'sheer madness'. The court heard he was in breach of a suspended 12-week prison sentence for a public order offence imposed last September. Gill, of no fixed address, admitted possessing an offensive weapon, escaping from custody, robbery, dangerous driving and driving whilst disqualified.

He was sentenced to a total of 46 months in prison and will be disqualified from driving for a further five years on his release.

Residents' horror at dead geese

RESIDENTS have been left horrified at dead geese have been left 'rotting' in a pond in the Black Country.

The residents have said the Canada geese have been left dead in a pond in Smethwick's Victoria Park for weeks – with some of them decomposing into skeletons.

It is claimed there are more than 10 dead birds in the water, with their carcasses giving off a pungent stink.

A spokesman for the RSPCA said they suspect the geese have died due to avian botulism. While a Sandwell Council spokesman said they are working to remove the birds as quickly as possible – and one dead bird has been sent off for an autopsy to find out what is causing the deaths.

Tom Gasiorowski, who regularly visits the park, said: "There is an increasing number of dead birds, mainly Canada geese floating in the water or rotting just outside in the 'wildlife pool' in Victoria Park in Smethwick. The smell is terrible, the water is dirty as the bread is also rotting together with the dead birds in the water. Some of them are now skeletons.

"The dead birds are rotting in the water when visiting birds taking the bath and drinking this now toxic water."

Jean Wilkinson said: "These dead geese are floating in the water and they look like they have been there for a long time. I have never seen a pool so filthy."

Leisure chief Councillor Bill Gavan, said: "The council has found dead wildfowl at Victoria Park Pool in Smethwick and our partners Sercio have removed these birds as quickly as possible. Some have unfortunately been difficult to reach. However a team from Sandwell Valley alongside Sercio staff will be removing all the hard-to-reach ones."

450 knives and blades are off the streets as amnesty bins across region are emptied

HUNDREDS of knives and blades have been emptied from weapon surrender bins all across the West Midlands.

A total of 450 blades have been anonymously disposed of in the 12 discreet bins throughout the region, as part of ongoing police work to tackle violent crime.

The secure boxes are designed to offer people a place to dispose of weapons safely, and were last emptied in September 2017, when 184 knives and two guns were discovered.

West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "These bins are just one measure we are taking to get knives off our streets.

Report by Megan Archer

"They continue to prove their success and I am keen to roll them out further across the West Midlands.

"The bins are providing people with a legal and safe way to dispose of knives which they shouldn't be carrying.

Programme

"Every knife posted into a surrender bin is potentially a life saved."

He added: "They work best when the community wants them and the message I have

been receiving loud and clear is that more are needed and that is what I am delivering on.

"Knives can ruin the lives of not just individuals but their families and friends as well. If you have a knife or any weapon, or know somebody who does, I strongly recommend that you dispose of it in one of these bins."

The PCC is expanding the programme which will see 20 surrender bins in the region by April 2019.

The weapon surrender units are part of ongoing work around tackling gangs and violence in the West Midlands.

Crime statistics from ONS released last month showed the West Midlands had a rise

in knife crime of 19 per cent compared to the previous year.

Knife crime lead superintendent Ian Parnell said: "One knife-related crime is one too many. The consequences of carrying knives can be catastrophic.

"We've seen people suffer very serious injuries as well as the impact it has on families and communities.

"If you carry or use a knife you are likely to be arrested and prosecuted and, if found guilty, likely to face a substantial prison sentence."

Weapons which have been recovered from the bins will now be destroyed.

Joel's birthday remembered as £150,000 milestone reached

Report by Marion Brennan

THE mother of Tunisia terror attack victim Joel Richards has spoken of a difficult period in her life as she commemorated what would have been his 23rd birthday.

In a bitter-sweet last few days, Suzy Evans also acknowledged passing the £150,000 milestone in her fundraising efforts for Smile For Joel, the charity she and son Owen, now 18, set up in his memory.

She encouraged people to sign up to the Run For Joel event in Sandwell Valley Park next month, the charity's main annual fundraiser.

Student Joel, from Wednesbury, died alongside uncle Adrian Evans, grandfather Patrick Evans and 35 others in the terror attacks near Sousse in 2015. The 19-year-old Saddlers fan, who was a promising referee, was awarded a string of posthumous honours.

His mother spent the evening of his birthday, August 3, with his friends recalling happy times. Joel's younger brother Owen is currently at a summer camp in America while Suzy's mother died in May, aged 74.

She said: "It's been a really hard time, especially being on my own. My mum never really got over losing her husband, her only son and her grandson. She'd been in good health up to then but their deaths broke her heart.

"Owen has been an inspiration to us all with the way he has coped and the work he does for the charity. He'd signed up for Camp America for the summer and rightly stuck to his plans. So I got together with Joel's friends locally and we raised a glass to him."

She added: "One of the last conversations I had with him was about whether he could make refereeing a career. He was so good but he was also very humble. He said to me 'Mum, do you realise how fantastic you have to be to be a professional referee?' But when you hear all the comments about him, and how good he was, you wonder. But it's all 'What ifs'," she said.

But her main focus is to raise the total even higher with the Colour Blast Party run in Sandwell Valley Park on September 9, when people can choose between 5k and 3K routes. To sign up, visit www.smileforjoel.com and click on the link.

ANIMAL lovers in Oldbury have shown just how barking mad they are for pets after helping to raise £2,180.69 for The Animal House Rescue.

Running from June 6 to July 3, a nationwide fundraising event was launched by Support Adoption For Pets, in conjunction with Pets At Home, with the aim to raise £550,000 to award to pet rescues across the UK. The community of Oldbury have helped smash that target and

push it to a whopping £575,464 to help pets in need this summer.

To raise funds, customers purchased £1 scratch cards in Pets At Home stores to be in with the chance of winning over 175,000 prizes including 50K 4inch HD TVs, Amazon Echo Dots, National Trust memberships and Love2Shop vouchers as well as making donations directly in store.

Amy Wilson, Fundraising Manager at Sup-

port Adoption For Pets commented: "We are so delighted to see that the nation has come together to raise such an impressive amount for pets in need. The Pets At Home store teams are a real inspiration and their hard work will go towards helping fund some fantastic rehoming centres that will change the lives of pets in need."

Pets At Home Store Manager Kerry Boulton said: "We're thrilled to have raised £2,180.69

Summer-thing for everyone in the sunshine



A sunseeker catches some rays at Walsall Arboretum



Splashing out – Jamie Neanock, aged 11, Sienna Lambert, six, Elliott Neanock, four, and Laila Lambert, seven, at Tettenhall pool

GET out the ice creams out again! It's certainly been a hot one with weather records being broken across Europe as the heatwave made a return.

Eight places in the centre, south and east of Portugal have broken their local temperature records with the mercury peaking at 45.2C on Thursday near Abrantes.



Danny Ebanks, aged 11, from West Bromwich, cools off in the play area at Walsall Arboretum where the water park has been very popular

Last week, a spokesman for the Met Office said the weather in the UK would mostly remain dry and after a weekend of sunshine, higher temperatures would continue, but not quite as hot as over 40 degrees!

And while the Midlands feels slightly cooler, in the mid to late 20s Celcius, those in the South East corner would be feeling the heat

with highs of over 30 degrees. Temperatures in the West Midlands are set to remain moderately low, with peaks of sunshine, but they are being driven higher across the Iberian peninsula by a hot air mass moving northward from Africa, which is also bringing dust from the Sahara Desert, meteorologists said. The mercury got close to a new record, at 46 degrees.

Oldbury pet-lovers help thousands for Animal House

for The Animal House Rescue. The teams thoroughly enjoyed working together to raise as much money as possible and we can't wait to see the impact that our support has to help find loving homes for pets in Oldbury."

Support Adoption For Pets is a charity established by Pets At Home in 2006. Since then it has helped over 1,000 rehoming centres and animal welfare organisations across the UK.

Visit www.supportadoptionforpets.co.uk

Fantasy trilogy complete – now for the prequel

WRITING his fantasy trilogy has been a labour of love for author Robert J Marsters, who is celebrating the publication of the highly-anticipated final book in the series.

The Cessation of Karrak has been lapped up by his loyal readers and, like its predecessors, has attracted five-star reviews.

Robert, who lives in Dudley with his wife Jane, says he is chuffed by the enthusiasm shown by his readers with many choosing to visit him at events to chat about his books.

"My books appeal to all ages, my youngest reader is 10 and my oldest is 80. Even if you're not a fantasy lover, you will enjoy the adventure story in there," says Robert.

React

"Jane proofreads the storyline to make sure it's all correct and then we edit the book together. It has to be right. I re-wrote the last 50 pages of Cessation of Karrak because I wasn't happy with it."

Robert enjoys meeting fans but admits he doesn't know how to react when he receives praise for his writing.

"I still find it hard to take compliments. If someone says 'I enjoyed it', I probably put a stupid grin on my face and say thank you."

He is now working on his fourth book – a prequel set 1,000 years before the trilogy, which also included The Ascension of Karrak and The Bane of Karrak.

"One of the characters was very popular and people want to know how it all started," says Robert. "These characters are alive in people's heads. I



Robert J Marsters with his new book The Cessation of Karrak

was even sent a picture of what someone thought one of the characters looked like."

Robert hopes to publish his fourth book before Christmas.

His writing career began as a way to keep his wife Jane's spirits up while she was receiving treatment for breast cancer in 2015.

Having left his job as a bed store

manager to care for her, he would try his best to keep her smiling and she enjoyed his writing so much that she encouraged him to turn it into a book.

Originally planned as a single novel, it grew into a fantasy saga.

Robert, who has self-published the third instalment, also has plans in the pipeline for two further books.

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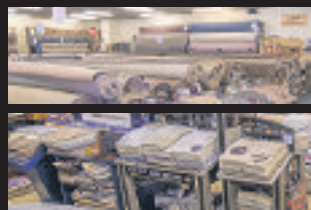
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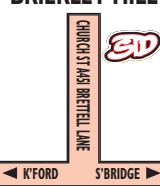
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Increase in attacks by prison inmates

ATTACKS by prisoners on staff and other inmates have rocketed to record levels in West Midlands jails over the last five years, new figures reveal.

According to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) figures, South Staffordshire's three prisons saw 313 assaults on staff last year – four times as many as in 2012.

And the data shows that prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in HMP Oakwood, HMP Featherstone and Brinsford YOI jumped to almost 1,000 last year, in what has been described as an 'extremely concerning' rise in violence.

Despite the sharp spike in assaults, all three institutions were said to be meeting the majority of their targets in the latest MoJ prison performance tables.

However, HMP Birmingham was given the bottom rung rating in the tables, with MoJ inspectors branding the prison's performance as being of 'serious concern'.

It is the second year running that the prison has been awarded the lowest possible grade, with a staggering 434 assaults on staff recorded in 2017, compared to 75 in 2012.

Your chance to reward efforts of region's unsung sporting heroes



UNSUNG heroes giving up their time to promote and organise sport and exercise across the Black Country can be honoured for their efforts.

Nominations are now open for the 2018 Black Country Sport & Physical Activity Awards.

The categories are: Community coach; community club; community project; power of sport; aspiring talent and unsung hero.

Previous winners have included Olympic gymnast Kristian Thomas, wheelchair tennis champion Jordanne Whaley and fund-raisers Suzy Evans and son Owen Richards as well as paralympian swimmer Ellie Simmonds and marathon runner 'Blind' Dave Heeley.

But the awards also seek to reward the many unheralded heroes in our communities quietly devoting their spare time to volunteer, support and inspire people of every age to take up sport and exercise.

Inspire

The Black Country Sport & Physical Activity Awards are run each year by Active Black Country, the sporting arm of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

An Active Black Country spokeswoman said: "There are thousands of people across the Black Country doing fantastic things to inspire people to lead healthier, fun and active lives, from netball to boccia, football to zumba. Active Black Country want to recognise those individuals and organisations."



Some of the award winners from last year's Black Country Sports & Physical Activity Awards

Winners will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday October 4 at Himley Hall, Dudley.

A total of 35 finalists were in the running for the awards last year when former women's England Rugby player Maggie Alphonsi MBE, who lifted the World Cup with England in 2014, was the guest speaker. Winners included the Dudley Dis-

ability Swimming Project; Tividale Football Academy; the Federation of Abbey Infant & Abbey Junior Schools in Sandwell; Benson Community Project in Smethwick and Community Rangers FC.

The Unsung Hero award went to John Totney and Martin Floyd, who in two years tallied up 1,400 hours, or 58 days, of voluntary work supporting disabled people at

Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury. Nomination forms can be downloaded from: <https://www.activeblackcountry.co.uk/events/black-country-sport-physical-activity-awards-2018/>

All completed nomination forms can be sent to marketing@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk by the closing date of 5pm on Friday August 31.

Concern at fall in magistrate numbers

THE number of magistrates in the Black Country has plummeted by more than a third in just three years – one of the steepest drops across the whole of England and Wales.

Across the region there are 233 less magistrates than there were in 2015, with budget cuts and recruitment problems blamed for the reduction.

The figures have prompted warnings that the dwindling numbers could hinder the administration of justice with magistrates increasingly sitting in benches of two rather than three due to shortages.

Figures from the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary show that in the Black Country 259 magistrates are currently sitting, compared with 411 three years ago.

Across Staffordshire the number has fallen from 357 to 276, while nationally there has been a 25 per cent drop in the number of magistrates since 2015 (20,000 to 15,000).

The Magistrates Association chief executive Jon Collins said that for magistrate numbers to remain constant over the next 10 years, more than 8,000 new magistrates need to be recruited to replace those retiring once they turn 70.



Leaving on a staff outing from the Bell Street shop



Frank and Cliff Everall in presentation to retiring driver



The coach inspection ramp



Ford Cortina hire cars at the Bilston Road garage



Wolves on coach after the 1960 FA Cup win

Brothers left a city legacy

DON Everall used to be part of the very fabric of Wolverhampton.

Don and his brother Cliff started their coach business between the wars, although then they were known as charabancs.

By 1963 there were 37 vehicles in the Monmore Green yard, with three of them operating in West Bromwich, and a further 17 in the Stourbridge depot.

They supplied the Wolverhampton Wanderers team coach, unusually fitted with facing seats and tables, with table lamps, and the driver wore a special team badge.

Don Everall also began operating travel agencies, with the flagship shop in Bell Street, and to complete a rounded service for Black Country holidaymakers, also for a time had their own holiday camps in Wales. Don Everall also ran a Ford car dealership on the Bilston Road, which operated a fleet of hire cars.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

A subsidiary, Don Everall Aviation Ltd, operated Wolverhampton Municipal Airport for the council for many years.

When inclusive tour charter flights became popular it started its own airline, operating mostly from Birmingham Airport, with DC-3 airliners ferrying holidaymakers to the continent.

The airline was the first of the businesses to end, when the Everalls balked at the cost of introducing new turboprop airliners, and sold out.

Slowly the other travel businesses followed suit over the years, until the name finally disappeared.

A Don Everall drivers' club still operates, and at the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre, the Don Everall name is preserved in a number of exhibits.



Don Everall driver's badge



The Wolves coach-driver's badge



Some of the coach fleet in the Monmore Green yard

Refreshed Mazda6 looks a stunner

**NEW REG
SPECIAL**

By Ian Donaldson

As the car world moves swiftly towards SUVs and away from diesels Mazda has updated its large saloon and estate range – and swears there's a future for diesels.

And you can see why: until the arrival of Mazda's very own SUVs a year or two back the Mazda6 saloon and estates were the company's strongest sellers in the UK.

As for diesel, sales of new diesel cars in general may be down a worrying 25 per cent this year but Mazda still reckons more than half the buyers of this latest range will head for the smelly pumps at refuelling time.

So this new refreshed 6 has a mildly revamped pair of 2.2 litre diesels on offer, one with a bit more power than previously, and a 2.5 litre petrol engine joins the line up for the first time, alongside the existing pair of 2.0 litre petrol units.

Handsome

All of them now power a car that looks a little sharper inside and out than before, starting with a bolder radiator grille making an already handsome car look mildly menacing in the rear view mirror of the car ahead.

Mazda was early with the special vibrant red paint finish that's taking over the automotive colour palette from grey and silver and in a new £800 optional take on the theme – called soul red crystal this time – the 6 looks a stunner.

Prices now start at £23,195 for a petrol 2.0 litre SE-L Nav+ in saloon form or another £800 for the roomy Tourer estate. It's a £3,200 price hike over the previous entry level Mazda6 but reflects more standard kit than before to soften the blow.

For instance, every new Mazda6 has a head up display projecting speed, speed limit and sat nav turn instructions on the windscreen and there's a forward facing camera to detect pedestrians ahead and put the brakes on if you don't.

There's also intelligent cruise control on every one of the newcomers, keeping you a safe distance from the car in front.

Under the bonnet the larger of the two diesel engines has power increased from 172bhp to 181bhp while both it and the carried over (and more popular) 148bhp diesel both have exhaust fluid injection to cut emissions.

Subtle but thorough changes to the suspension are aimed at making the ride more comfortable and the handling a little sharper,



The car now looks a little sharper inside and out, starting with a bolder radiator making an already handsome car look mildly menacing

while there's more sound insulation throughout the car to quieten the interior.

Once inside this refreshed model you'll notice front seats made more comfortable by reshaping them and changing the padding and a dashboard made to look more upmarket with a larger (eight inch) centre display screen and there's new wood to finish the instrument panel and door trim.

No change to the size of boot, which remains a useful 480 litres for the saloon and 522 on the estate, with a generous 1,664 if you fold down the rear seats.

Sadly, there weren't any diesels to drive on the launch of these latest cars so it was a petrol only exercise, starting with the new 2.5 litre model. It uses an engine already familiar

to Mazda drivers in the States, but new to our shores and added to the range to swell the non-diesel choice.

Mated as standard to an automatic gearbox, it cost £30,795 as the saloon or £31,695 as an estate and is dripping with kit, from a 360 degree camera view on its dash screen, adaptive LED headlights, 19ins alloys and seats heated front and rear and cooled in the front.

Over a mixed route of Cotswolds' roads the 2.5 litre car returned 39.6mpg (42.6mpg in the new official test) thanks in part to the way it cuts out two of the engine's four cylinders under light load at moderate speed.

It never felt especially brisk, with a 138mph top speed and 8.1 second time to 62mph. It's

more of a cruiser, especially as the engine turns a little rowdy when pushed.

Better to drive was the less powerful 2.0 litre 163bhp petrol engine version with a lovely six-speed manual gearbox. It was quieter than its more powerful sibling and, mysteriously, also rode the bumps better despite rolling on the same-sized wheels.

Better still was the 51.2mpg shown after a longish drive, mostly behind other vehicles obviously in no hurry at all.

Frustrating, but very good for the pocket – and a generous improvement on the official 44.1mpg.

Even so, previous experience of this Mazda's diesel engines means they are almost certainly the pick of the bunch.

Lexus LC Limited Edition revealed



Special-edition variant of LC gets eye-catching body colour

Japanese car manufacturers are renowned for a love of making special-edition machinery, and Lexus is the latest to introduce another to its line-up with this – the aptly named Lexus LC Limited Edition.

There's a yellow theme for this variant of the sports car, which was first introduced in 2017. The bodywork is finished in an eye-catching Naples Yellow paint colour, which continues to the cabin – where the black door panels feature yellow Alcantara inserts.

Yellow stitching features on the white leather seats, instrument panel, steering wheel and centre too, while the headliner is furnished with Alcantara.

As for technology, Limited Edition buyers can expect a head-up display, 10-way power adjustment for the front seats and a 13-speaker Mark Levinson audio system for no extra cost.

Completing the package is a set of 21-inch alloy wheels, with the Lexus LC Limited Edition available with two powertrains. The first is a 3.5-litre V6 hybrid powertrain with 472bhp and 648Nm of torque, making the coupe capable of 0-60mph in 4.5 seconds before hitting a 155mph top speed.

There's also a naturally-aspirated 5.0-litre V8 variant, producing 470bhp and 540Nm of torque. The result is an identical 0-60mph time and top speed to the hybrid.

No official word yet on how many units of the Lexus LC Limited Edition will be coming to the UK, nor how much it will cost, but order books are set to open in November. Expect to hear more news following the car's public debut at the Paris Motor Show in October.

Make work a pleasure with the new Isuzu Utah Luxe



Isuzu UK has launched the D-Max Utah Luxe double cab, a striking, comfortable and hardworking pick-up.

A new addition to the Utah range, the pickup includes a host of enhancements, whilst retaining all the features of the multi award-winning Isuzu D-Max Utah. It will be limited to a volume of 75 vehicles in total and will be available in a manual and automatic transmission.

The upgrades of this striking new Utah model can be seen straight away and the Utah Luxe has the following equipment over a standard double cab:

- 18" Diamond Cut Alloy Wheels
- Front Bumper Guard
- Bonnet Protector

- Pro-lift tailgate assist
- Carpet mats

The 18-inch Diamond Cut alloy wheels, bonnet protector and front bumper guard offer a stylish dynamic to the vehicle. The inclusion of the pro-lift tailgate assist reduces tailgate weight by 95 per cent for easier and safer opening.

Utah Luxe is available in standard Utah colours but Isuzu recommend Splash White, Titanium Silver and Cosmic Black Mica, as these particular colours provide the strongest aesthetic.

Pricing for the new Utah Luxe double cab manual is only £26,159 CV on-the-road (excluding VAT) and £27,159 CV on-the-road for the automatic, offering a considerable

number of upgrades for only £1,000 over the standard Utah double cab CV on-the-road (excluding VAT) price.

Following an already successful year for the award-winning D-Max, the Utah Luxe offers the capability and practicality of the D-Max whilst looking and feeling more sophisticated throughout the pickup.

The award-winning Isuzu D-Max has already had a successful 2018 with several accolades including being crowned 'Pick Up of the Year' at the 2018 WhatVan? Awards, 'Most Reliable Pickup' for 2018 by Professional Pickup & 4X4 magazine, 'Best Workhorse Pickup' for 2018 by Trade Van Driver and 'Best Pickup 2018' by Scottish Field.

Flagship Grandland X raises stakes

By John Griffiths

It's big, plush and lavishly equipped with the latest technology – so Vauxhall is justified in naming its latest version of the Grandland X 'Ultimate',

It also comes with a new and more powerful engine and an eight-speed automatic gearbox, earning it pole position as the flagship of the range.

It's the biggest of the Vauxhall SUV range (the others are the Grossland X and Mokka X) and is a worthy rival for the biggest seller in this class, the Nissan Qashqai, and Ford's Kuga.

It's a five-seater family car with a big boot that's packed with more gadgets and gizmos than you can shake a stick at. Of course at £34,040 it's also top of the range in price terms. The range starts from £22,515.

The Grandland X range also comes with a petrol option, a 130PS, three cylinder turbo with surprisingly zesty performance and great economy (11.1 seconds to 62mph and 55.4mpg) for a car of this size. There's also the popular 1.6 litre turbo diesel – familiar from the Astra and Insignia ranges – with 120Ps and a hefty 300Nm of torque which is slightly slower off the mark but about ten per cent more economical.

The Ultimate is unique in the range with the new 2.0 litre turbo under the bonnet, combining 177Ps of power and 400NM of torque. It also has the eight speed automatic transmission, enabling brisk acceleration with longer gearing at the top end for smoother, more economical motorway cruising.

Its ultimate statistic are impressive: 0 to 62mph in 9.1 seconds, 57.6mpg and a CO2 rating of 128g/km.

Like the 1.6 diesel, the 2.0 litre unit is



There's an upmarket feel to the car

quiet and refined in operation – among the best in class for refinement. It gets some extra assistance in this case as the auto transmission keeps revs relatively low even as you get up to speed.

It all adds to the upmarket feel you'd expect of a top of the range car. All seats are generously sized (even the centre rear is adult-friendly) and head and legroom are excellent all round. The boot, with an adjustable floor, offers a family-sized 514 litres of space which increases to 1,653 litres.

The big different is more oomph, of course, plus increased towing ability – 2,000 as opposed to 1,600kg for a braked trailer.

The Grandland has strong, tall lines of an SUV with the high hip height (for easy access) and commanding seating position, for better visibility. It's a comfortable car too, the ride a fine balance between sporty dynamics and a supple ride – a Vauxhall virtue from the Astra and Insignia re-engineered for the large car.

Although it is big, it isn't heavy to drive: and it retains much of the agility and accurate



Its size, blend of performance and economy plus its particularly high specification put it in the top echelons of family transport

tracking through corners as its smaller stablemates. Its widetrack gives the look, and feel, of a car which is firmly planted.

There's no four wheel drive option with the Grandland X (you need a Mokka for that) but – like other parts it shares the option of Peugeot's 'Intelligrip' system. This allows you to choose driving modes via a rotary dial on the centre console, setting up throttle response and torque distribution between the front wheels according to conditions.

Traction control and hill start assist are also standard, along with an electronic stability programme. It provides better traction on wet and slippery roads, and even allows for a mild off-road excursion.

The Ultimate's standard equipment list is a long one, but it includes features such

as adaptive cruise control with pedestrian detection and automatic emergency braking, driver drowsiness alert, and advanced park assist.

The optional adaptive cruise control with stop function, maintains the speed and selected distance to the vehicle ahead and brakes to a full stop or accelerates the Grandland X when required. The outstanding safety level of the Grandland X was confirmed by Euro NCAP who awarded it five stars, with the new Vauxhall SUV earning high marks in all four safety categories.

The Ultimate is also equipped with adaptive forward lighting (AFL) LED headlights. Functions such as cornering light, high beam assist and auto levelling guarantee optimal illumination of the road ahead in all situations.

Front foglamps, a heated windscreen, electrically heated door mirrors, a power tailgate, heated seats, leather-faced seats and dual zone climate control are also on the list.

This flagship Grandland X raises the stakes in this class of the SUV sector, easily the fastest growing in the new car market. Its size, blend of performance and economy plus its particularly high specification put it in the top echelons of family transport.

● **Take a look at the car at:**
T Wall Vauxhall
High Street
Pensnett
Kingswinford DY6 8XB
Tel: 01384 288333
Website: www.twall.co.uk

High on the list of affordable SUVs

By John Griffiths

With no signs of a dip in sales of compact SUVs – by far the biggest sector of the new car market – let's look at Vauxhall's Mokka X.

The Mokka X, one of the more capacious examples of the genre, is well specified and the engines include a 1.4 petrol turbo and Vauxhall's 1.6 litre whisper diesel which does live up to its name.

The test car was powered by the latter unit as used in top models of the much-acclaimed new Astra, with 136PS of power and a hefty 320NM of torque, which endows it with the dual benefits of lively performance and relaxed cruising.

Refinement

It is indeed a quiet unit: never raucous even under hard acceleration, and virtually silent even at motorway speeds. Its refinement is matched by its tax efficiency: its 114g/km CO2 rating means road tax and benefit-in-kind tax are kept relatively low.

Official tests put its average fuel consumption at almost 66mpg, but such official figures are rarely (if ever) achieved in the real world so my test figure of 54mpg over a couple of hundred miles of mixed driving might be a reasonable guide.

The test car was in Elite trim and costs £24,415 but the range goes from £17,640 to £26,815, which is very competitive in this sector of the market.

The Mokka has a wing-shaped horizontal grille and double wing LED headlights.

It has sporty good looks without compromising on interior space, able to accommodate five adults in comfort plus 356 litres of cargo.

Naturally you can fold down the rear seats to increase boot capacity to 1,372 litres.

The seating position is high, for easier



The seating position is high, for easier access and visibility



The Mokka has a wing-shaped horizontal grille

access and good visibility, which is one of the big attractions for SUV buyers.

The big, sports-style front seats hold you comfortable and secure, and for those in the front seat heaters are standard on this model as was a heated leather steering wheel.

The test car was a front wheel drive version (which the majority of buyers will choose) although there is a 4x4 option. In spite of its height, the Mokka X handles well and corners with little discernible body roll, probably

because of rather firm suspension which you do notice over some of our B-roads. The car performs well, and feels particularly relaxed during motorway cruising.

Equipment includes digital radio, Bluetooth, automatic headlights and wipers, electrically heated and folding door mirrors, ABS, stability and traction controls, hill start assist and a tyre pressure monitoring system.

For those who prefer petrol to diesel, Vauxhall has the option of a 1.4 direct injection

turbo engine from the Astra. This 152PS unit, even with a six-speed automatic transmission and apadtive all wheel drive, is still capable of averaging 43.5mpg and CO2 emissions of 150g/km.

It's pretty nifty too, able to tackle the 0 to 62mph dash in 9.4 seconds.

There's a 140PS version of the same engine, providing a little more economy and lower emissions.

Since its launch six years ago, Vauxhall has

sold more than 500,000 Mokkas in Europe – with one in five going to UK buyers.

Its engines and interior should keep it high up on the list of affordable SUVs.

● **Take a look at the car at:**
T Wall Vauxhall
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VAUXHALL

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range (excl. Ampera): Urban: 12.7 (22.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 23.9 (11.8) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) - 88.3 (3.2). CO₂ emissions: 373 - 85g/km. Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU-regulated test data is provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Offers subject to availability. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. *Finance provided by GMAC UK plc, P.O. Box 6666, Cardiff, CF15 7YT. Finance applicants must be 18 or over. Finance subject to status and terms and conditions. Deposit shown for illustrative purposes only; with lower deposits monthly payments will be higher. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Pay final payment & keep the car, (ii) Return the car or (iii) Trade in against a new vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition and mileage of the vehicle. All offers subject to stock availability, terms and conditions. Images used for illustration purposes only. Information correct at time of publication E&OE.

Three highlights from Suzuki range

Since launching its first car in 1955, the Suzulight, Suzuki has produced a vast range of significant models each tailored to the needs of its time.

Here are three current favourites out of the current range:

SWIFT

Available in SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5 grades.

The 111PS 1.0-litre three cylinder Boosterjet turbo engine offers CO2 emissions of 104g/km and combined fuel consumption of 61.4mpg.

A 90PS 1.2-litre four cylinder Dualjet engine offers CO2 emissions of 98g/km and combined fuel consumption of 65.7mpg.

The Boosterjet engine is now available with Suzuki's SHVS mild hybrid system (Smart Hybrid Vehicle by Suzuki) with CO2 emissions of 97g/km.

It utilises Suzuki's 'HEARTECT' lightweight platform strategy – kerb weight of just 890kg for SZ3 model.

Available in 10 colours with full personalisation options available for both exterior and interior trim.

Standard equipment includes: Six airbags, air conditioning, DAB Radio, privacy glass, LED daytime running lights and Bluetooth fitted as standard on all new Swift models.

There is also a Swift Sport, a perky little character with a 140PS 1.4-litre four-cylinder Boosterjet turbo engine offering CO2 emissions of 125g/km and combined fuel consumption of 50.4mpg.

VITARA S

The 1.4-litre petrol engine is a 140PS Direct Injection Turbocharged petrol engine offering a wide spread of torque from just 1,500rpm – 41 per cent more than the 1.6-litre engine in the range. It also offers 17 per cent more power and four per cent improvement in fuel



The Ignis is available in SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5 grades



The Vitara S can achieve 52.3mpg in the manual model

economy versus the 1.6-litre petrol engine. Unique S model trim specification includes Gloss Black 17 inch alloy wheels, vertical grille design, rear upper spoiler, satin silver door mirrors and red interior stitching.

CO2 emissions of 127g/km for manual transmission, one gram higher for the optional auto transmission. EC Combined fuel consumption of 52.3mpg for manual model.

The S model completed the Vitara range of four grades SZ4, SZ-T and SZ5.

IGNIS

This compact crossover model is available in SZ3, SZ-T and SZ5 grades with a 90hp 1.2-litre four cylinder Dualjet engine offering CO2 emissions of 104g/km and combined fuel consumption of 61.4mpg.

Available with Suzuki's SHVS mild hybrid system offering latest technology with CO2 emissions of 97g/km and combined fuel consumption of 65.7mpg.

Standard equipment includes: Six airbags,



Swift Sport, a perky little character with a 140PS 1.4-litre four-cylinder Boosterjet turbo engine

air conditioning and DAB Radio and Bluetooth.

SZ-T adds sliding rear seats, rear view camera, wheel arch extensions, side mouldings and roof rails and 16-inch alloy wheels.

SZ5 adds auto air conditioning, satellite navigation, LED headlights, Dual Camera Brake Support and Cruise Control.

SZ5 is available with ALLGRIP 'AUTO' 4WD system.

All Suzuki models are covered by a three-

year/60,000-mile new vehicle warranty, one year AA Suzuki Assistance, providing 24-hour UK and European roadside assistance, recovery and associated services

● You can check out the entire range at:

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Halesowen
B63 3NH
0121 503 0001
www.halesowenmotorhouse.co.uk

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Official fuel consumption figures for the Suzuki range in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 42.1 (6.7) to 58.8 (4.8), extra urban from 55.4 (5.1) to 76.3 (3.7), combined from 49.5 (5.7) to 65.7 (4.3). Official CO₂ emissions from 106g/km to 97g/km. Fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results.

*Offer applies to new unregistered Suzuki cars currently in stock at Halesowen Motor House. Excludes Swift Sport. Vehicles are subject to availability and must be ordered and registered by 31 August 2018. Applies to UK private retail customers only. All specifications and offers correct at the time of going to print. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offer may be withdrawn at any time.

All-new Ford Focus and Fiesta

The all-new Ford Focus is ready for September delivery, with all main models offering enhanced specification while being priced more competitively or at carry-over levels.

Prices start at £17,930 for the Focus Style – £2,300 below the model it replaces. Focus Zetec and ST-Line – together representing 55 per cent of sales – are now £850 and £250 less respectively.

The new Focus range will comprise seven variants from launch. Starting with Style (at £17,930), the range progresses through Zetec (£19,300), ST-Line (£21,570), ST-Line X (£24,050), Titanium (£21,550), Titanium X (£22,820) and Vignale (£25,450).

Each model has an outstanding combination of comfort, safety and driver assistance technologies, helping to make the all-new Ford Focus the most accomplished and technically advanced Focus ever.

Focus Style comes as standard with 16in alloy wheels, air conditioning, DAB digital radio with Bluetooth and Emergency Assist, electronic parking brake, autonomous emergency braking, tyre pressure monitoring, Hill Start Assist and Lane-Keeping Aid.

Zetec models add highlights such as Ford's acclaimed SYNC3 DAB Radio with a 6.5in touchscreen and Apple CarPlay/Android Auto functionality, cruise control with speed limiter, front fog lights and QuickClear heated windshield.

Titanium models bring additional comfort and convenience features including front and rear parking sensors, heated front seats, dual-zone climate control, keyless entry and start, a larger eight-inch colour touchscreen, satellite navigation and FordPass Connect wireless connectivity.

For sporty drivers, the ST-Line offers unique



Britain's favourite car, the Ford Fiesta



A new Chrome Copper colour is now available

body styling, including unique upper and lower grille, rear spoiler and polished twin tailpipes.

At the top of the all-new Focus range sits the luxurious Focus Vignale, joining the upscale Ford range that already includes Mondeo, S-MAX, Kuga, Edge and Fiesta Vignale models.

After eight years as Britain's favourite car, Ford Fiesta is passing its sales crown to an all-new model.

Across the country, 1,000,000 Brits have

ordered new Fiestas since 2008 and over 4,500,000 since the car first arrived in 1976. Of the 120,000 Fiestas registered in the last 12 months, 70 per cent were five-door models, 90 per cent petrol and 60 per cent Zetec, while 20 per cent chose the Titanium series.

Red, white and blue are three of the four favourite Fiesta colours among patriotic UK customers. Around 22 per cent of new Fiestas are sold in blue, 18 per cent in black, 16 per cent in white, 15 per cent in red and 10 per cent in silver. For the new Fiesta line-up



The new Focus line-up with prices starting at £17,930 – £2,300 below the model it replaces

on display in dealerships now, the Chrome Copper colour pictured plus new Blue Wave and Bohai Mint green shades are among the choices.

The new Ford Fiesta is billed as the most technologically advanced small car on sale thanks to 15 high-tech features ensuring a safe and smooth journey such as Pre-Collision Assist with pedestrian detection, meaning that the driver is warned of people who are in or near the road ahead, automatic perpendicular parking, blind spot alert and auto high beam.

Joining the Ford Fiesta's core range of Zetec and Titanium in dealerships will be sporty ST-Line and luxurious Vignale models, both offering the acclaimed 1.0 EcoBoost 140PS engine, followed by an all-new Active crossover and hot ST in spring next year.

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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) Highest FORD Kuga 1.5 EcoBoost (182PS), A6-AWD: Urban 30.1 (9.4), Extra Urban 44.8 (6.3), Combined 37.7 (7.5), CO₂ emissions 173(g/km). Lowest: FORD All New Fiesta 1.5 TDCi (85PS) With Stop/Start - 3 Door, M6: urban 80.7 (3.5), extra urban 94.2 (3.0), combined 88.3 (3.2). Official CO₂ emission 82g/km. Details correct at time of publishing & are subject to change without notice. *Finance subject to status to UK residents aged 18 or over through Ford Credit. Guarantees/indemnities may be required. Finance example figures are based on 6,000 miles per annum for illustration purposes & may vary depending on circumstances. All-New Focus 0% APR offer is over 2 years. Offers available on vehicles ordered in August 2018. Please note calls may be recorded for training & quality purposes. Details correct at time of publication, E&OE. Pictures used for illustration purposes only.

MG ZS offers a great value package

By Ryan Hiron

The MG ZS is the Chinese-owned, British manufacturer's new compact SUV.

It slots in the middle of MG's current range, sitting between the MG3 hatchback and MG GS SUV, and the company is billing it as its "greatest car yet". With six months of development just for the UK, MG is hoping it will be living up to that statement.

With the compact SUV market so strong these days, MG is aiming to make the ZS stand out through a low price and a seven-year manufacturer warranty.

Design

Aside from the ZS nameplate – previously attached to a high-performance, Rover 45-based saloon – the compact SUV is an almost totally new car in the MG line-up.

It introduces a new design language for the brand, showcasing a much larger grille and more angular styling cues compared to its GS and MG3 stablemates.

A new engine joins the lineup as well – a range-topping, 1.0-litre turbocharged three-cylinder engine developed in conjunction with General Motors.

Two petrol engines and gearboxes are available for the compact SUV – the aforementioned new 1.0-litre motor available with a six-speed automatic and MG's own 1.5-litre, naturally aspirated unit which is paired to a five-speed manual.

We spent most driving the 1.5-litre engine. It develops 105bhp and 141Nm of torque, going from 0-60mph in 10.4 seconds and up to a top speed of 109mph. Fuel economy is a claimed 49.6mpg with CO2 emissions of 129g/km.



There are 448 litres of boot space with all seats in place

In urban driving, the MG ZS offers a perfectly fine experience. A high seating position, good all-round visibility, soft suspension and parking sensors – coupled with a camera on higher-spec models – make city driving easy and stress-free.

However, do expect plenty of gear changes and high-revving at traffic lights because of the lack of low-end torque.

MG also makes a big deal of the car's three steering modes – urban, normal and dynamic. In all honesty, each setting has no major effect – with dynamic adding a little more weight, and urban taking some away. The differences are noticeable, but not worlds apart and will likely be an untouched feature after a while of ownership.

MG has introduced a totally new design ethos with the ZS. It's by no means a bad looking car, in fact, it's arguably one of the better-looking cars in the compact SUV market. The front-end reminds us a whole lot of the current Mazda CX-3 while the back-end



MG has introduced a totally new design ethos with the ZS. It's arguably one of the better-looking cars in the compact SUV market.

is reminiscent of an earlier Kia Sportage.

We'd like to have seen something on the car that makes it stand out as an MG, rather than blend in with a sea of other crossovers.

The interior of the ZS looks quite impressive, offering a visual design of something in a much higher price bracket.

To touch though, it's not quite so good. The leather-effect materials have a cheap rubbery feel to them and hard, scratchy plastics are scattered around the cockpit. It'd be hard to expect anything more at the ZS' price-point, but it makes it hard to justify the savings over its rivals if cost isn't your priority.

It's certainly a practical car as well – offering

448 litres of boot space with all seats in place.

Considering the low price, the MG ZS is fairly generously equipped. Standard equipment on all models includes LED daytime running lights, Bluetooth connectivity and cruise control.

We tested the Excite model, which included 17-inch wheels, air-conditioning, 'designer' fabric seats and parking sensors – coming in at £13,995.

Range-topping Exclusive models offer an eight-inch touchscreen infotainment system that includes Apple CarPlay, satellite navigation and a reverse parking camera – starting at £17,495, it massively undercuts

the cost of rivals with similar level of equipment.

With prices starting at just £12,495, topped off with a seven-year, 80,000-mile warranty and zero per cent finance deals, it's a solid choice for anyone simply looking for a brand-new, practical car with the ease of knowing it can be relied on for a few years to come.

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Model shown: MG ZS Exclusive manual with Tri Coat paint (optional extra £695) in Dynamic Red at £16,190 OTR or £215.87 a month for a 60 month conditional sale agreement. Offer shown available on MG Exclusive manual with solid paint at £15,495 OTR or £199 a month for a 60 month conditional sale agreement. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months 'Vehicle Excise Duty'. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply. *0% APR: Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG ZS models until 31.03.18. A minimum deposit of 20% applies. 0% is not in conjunction with any other offer. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YU subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

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Flair brought to dependable package

By Jack Evans

Fastback might not be a term you're familiar with, but essentially it's a hatchback crossed with a saloon, often with swoopy details to almost make it look like a coupe.

In the UK, the only other car marketed specifically as a fastback is the Mazda 3, although that's a saloon. Now, though, it's time for Hyundai to delve into this teeny tiny sector with its i30 Fastback, adding further appeal to the popular model.

The Fastback is noticeably an i30, in terms of design and functionality. Both the interior and engine choices remain hardly unchanged compared to the estate and hatch, so the main differences come via its looks. A lower roofline gives the i30 a more coupe-like character, while a tapered rear windscreen integrates well into a ducktail-style spoiler.

The front grille has also been altered, being reduced in size to give it a wider stance. It also features revised LED daytime running lights, a front roof spoiler and altered air intakes. Two new alloy wheel designs are also exclusive to the Fastback. The final differences over the hatchback and estate are a new front bumper and slightly tinted front lights.

There are only two engines on offer in the i30 Fastback. Our test car was fitted with the cheaper of the two – a 118bhp, 1.0-litre petrol with three cylinders. It is refined on the motorway and efficient, with a claimed fuel economy figure of 54.3mpg. The higher-powered 138bhp 1.4-litre is a reasonably priced upgrade, and is also the only way to get an automatic gearbox – the 1.0-litre is mated exclusively to a six-speed manual.

The i30 Fastback's chassis has been



Everything works well and feels built to last

stiffened up ever so slightly over the regular hatchback's, and while it's certainly not enough to transform the car into a B-road stormer, it endows the Fastback with just a little extra ability when things get twisty. Despite the changes, the i30's suspension remains compliant enough over imperfections in the road to remain comfortable, and this means that there shouldn't be any complaints from the vehicle's occupants – be that driver or passengers.

Our test car came with a six-speed manual, and we'd argue that it's the best option for the i30 – the optional automatic doesn't quite suit the character of the car, and can be a little dim-witted at times.

Of all the i30 models, the Fastback is the smartest. The hatchback and estate models are both practical cars but are devoid of any visual excitement. Thankfully, the Fastback fills that gap.

While the Fastback is hardly a revolution in design, the rear end is where the main



A lower roofline gives the i30 a more coupe-like character

differences lie. The roofline is 30mm lower than the hatch, while a tapered rear windscreen looks the part, particularly as the rear integrates into a roof spoiler. It certainly adds some well-needed flair to the i30 range.

The interior of the i30 Fastback offers up everything we've come to expect from the South Korean manufacturer; decent build quality, relatively high levels of standard equipment, all of which is wrapped up in plastics are on-par for the segment.

Even base-spec cars get electronic lumbar control for the driver's seat. You've also got the choice of two different interior upholstery colours – and both are no-cost options.

As the 'premium' offering in the i30 range, trim levels start a few grades up from the hatchback.

The range kicks off with SE Nav, which offers all the basics – 17-inch alloy wheels, LED daytime running lights, all-round electric windows, a rear-view camera and an 8-inch infotainment display with sat-nav, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Make the £1,800 leap up to Premium and you'll gain niceties such as dual-zone climate control, heated front seats, LED head and taillights and faux leather upholstery, while a further £1,300 gives you real leather, a panoramic glass roof and a heated steering

wheel. Hyundai's typically limited range of optional extras means that, for the most part, the price you see is the price you'll pay.

The Hyundai i30 Fastback manages to take a car that's dependable, well-valued yet quite good to drive and brings a sense of flair to the occasion.

● Check out the Hyundai range at: Hyundai Birmingham West 68 Hagley Rd West Birmingham B67 5EZ Tel: 0121 434 6400 Website: www.hyundai.co.uk/dealer/birmingham-west



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Arona is a truly family-friendly car

By John Griffiths

Oh dear. SEAT has added a diesel variant to its appealing Arona range, and that leaves me with something of a dilemma.

I was impressed with the petrol model I drove earlier this year. Powered by another of those 1.0 litre, three-cylinder engines which punches well above its weight, it demonstrated sprightly yet refined performance and economy.

Now SEAT has released its diesel version, with a 1.6 litre unit producing the same 115PS as its stablemate, with plenty of go – slightly behind its petrol sibling off the line – but even better economy. That makes the fuel decision a tough one.

This Ibiza-based compact SUV feels lively in whichever guise, and stands out for its stability and pinpoint handling. These latter virtues are, of course very much a SEAT trait as the company sees itself as the more sporting brand within the VW empire. It's logical that this would be transferred from the new Ibiza to its close relative the Arona.

And you need a stand-out in this section of by far the fastest-growing area of the new car market, and it's no doubt played a part in the Spanish company's record sales – up 33 per cent in June compared to 2017, and following on from last year's all-time record.

New models have helped, including the larger Ateca SUV (its sales success seems to have surprised even SEAT), the latest Ibiza, and the Arona which has already won a number of awards including best diesel-powered compact SUV.

The test car on this occasion, an SE Technology Lux, costs £20,310. The range starts from under £17,000 while the flagship



The interior has a youthful feel

Xcellence Lux diesel auto tops the range at £25,165, and for the sporty-minded driver there's a 1.5 turbo EVO version with 150Ps of power. All are front wheel drive – there's no 4x4 option as very few potential buyers in this class want to pay the extra cost.

While it's based on the Ibiza platform, and the interiors/instrumentation have much in common, the Arona is a distinctive model, with its raised rear window and roof in a contrasting colour).

The Arona also has taller architecture (and bigger wheels) which produces some family-friendly advantages – more space for passengers and luggage, the higher seating position for better visibility and great ground clearance. It's on the same wheelbase as the Ibiza, so it's not hard to find a suitable parking place. The boot, for example, holds 400 litres of luggage with five people on board. That's nearly ten per cent larger than the hatchback. Legroom in the rear is generous by class standards, too.



The Arona is a distinctive model, with its raised rear window and roof in a contrasting colour

There's a good range of height and leg adjustment for the driver, and the steering wheel is multi-adjustable too so most drivers can find that ideal position. That's important on a car with a sporty character: it helps you feel fully in control and take advantage of the taut, almost sporty handling.

It turns in quickly, and doesn't suffer from body roll or instability in spite of the Arona's extra height. It's a rewarding drive, and that sets it apart somewhat from the 'hatchback on steroids' compact SUV class.

The diesel has the same output as the petrol 1.0, but it has 25 per cent more torque and at

lower revs. So while at a 10.5 seconds for the 62mph sprint it's just over half a second slower, the diesel has more low down torque for a bit more relaxed progress. Its official fuel average is 68.9mpg with a 106g/km CO2 rating.

The interior has a youthful feel, with SEAT's multi-function colour touch screen, including smartphone linking, a first-rate audio system and, in the case of the test car, satnav. SE spec also includes 17-inch alloys, air conditioning, cruise control, hill hold control and rear parking sensors. FR has a more sporting theme (including sports seats) while Xcellence trim is the best-equipped, luxury variant.

Across the range, Arona's have 'front assist', a radar-based warning and crash prevention system, and driver tiredness recognition.

The Arona is an interesting car engineering-wise as it's built on the stiff and dynamically capable platform used in other models across the VW, Audi and Skoda range. But it's also adjustable, shown by the fact that it's a bare 2mm longer than the Ibiza while retaining the same wheelbase. Such unseen elements are the basics for the Arona's dynamics, good ride and quiet character, but with a little extra height and some clever packaging SEAT has created a truly family-friendly car.

A facelift for SsangYong's seven-seater Turismo MPV



There's 875 litres of luggage space with seven adults seated

The capacious seven-seater SsangYong Turismo has received a substantial front-end facelift to bring it into line with other models in the SsangYong range.

Complete with LED daytime running lights, the car sports an elegant and sophisticated front-look with greatly enhanced road presence.

The top-of-the-range Turismo ELX comes with selectable four-wheel drive, a 7-speed Mercedes-Benz automatic transmission, cruise control, parking sensors, rear seating privacy glass, 16" alloy wheels, roof rails, heated front seats, rain sensing wipers and automatic headlights.

It also now includes a smart infotainment system with Bluetooth, RDS, DAB radio, Apple Carplay and Android Auto plus a rear view camera.

At over five-metres long and with a three-metre wheelbase, Turismo is larger than a standard sized MPV

people carrier, and features a powerful 2.2 litre diesel engine.

Thanks to its 3,000mm wheelbase, Turismo provides a huge interior space where seven adults can travel in supreme comfort with their luggage loaded in the back, and without having to compromise on passenger accommodation. There are three rows of seats as well as the large load area which can be further increased by removing the third row completely. This gives a massive load carrying capability of between 875 litres with seven adults seated, through to two adults and 3,146 litres of load space.

The new Turismo is on sale now, with prices ranging from £20,495 for the two-wheel drive EX, to £26,995 for the ELX with four-wheel drive, and is also available through Motability.

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#Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Vehicles shown for illustrative purposes only, and may be fitted with optional equipment. Brilliant paint, metallic, pearlescent and premium two-coat paint and parking distance sensors included with each lease. Tri-coat premium paint is available as an additional extra-cost at full option price. The facilities offered are for the hire (bailment) of goods. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876). City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE19HB. Offer valid 1 July – 30 September 2018. To qualify you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance, the Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of the Personal Independence Payment, the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement or the Armed Forces Independence Payment which will be taken in lieu of the four weekly rental. Full written details, including terms and conditions, are available on request. All information correct at time of going to press.



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Rick's Piano Odyssey for his new tour

Following the hugely successful Piano Portraits tour last year, Rick Wakeman has decided to do it again.

The virtuoso has a new release and tour, this time entitled Piano Odyssey, which will stop off at Birmingham's Town Hall on December 11 and will pack a festive twist. The record precedes that, arriving on September 14.

The tour will feature even more classic tracks given Rick's unique piano treatment, and will travel to towns and cities not previously visited in 2017.

Former Yes keyboardist Rick said: "In the footsteps of Piano Portraits, the new album Piano Odyssey features a collection of music, old and new, that includes some particular favourites of mine. I'm looking forward to performing tracks from it on my own odyssey around the UK."

His Piano Portraits album in January 2017 made chart history, becoming the first solo piano album to enter the UK's Top 10, eventually reaching number six.

Inspired by the unprecedented public reaction to his cover of Bowie's Life On Mars – he also played on Bowie's original – the album features instrumental versions of hits that Rick was originally involved with, such as Space Oddity and Morning Has Broken, as well as others he chose for their melodies, including Stairway To Heaven.

The December dates – including Birmingham – are a Christmas tour in which the set list will be given a seasonal twist.

James Hurn as 'the lad himself', Tony Hancock



Lost Hancock revived

LONG-LOST Tony Hancock radio scripts from the 1950s are to be revived in the Black Country, the home region of scriptwriter Larry Stephens.

The Lost Hancocks: Vacant Lot will be performed at Stourbridge Town Hall's Wollaston Studio on September 19.

Birmingham-born Tony Hancock was a giant of post-war British comedy, best known for his radio and television series Hancock's Half-Hour. The story behind the scripts goes back 66 years to 1952, when comedy writer

Larry Stephens – who lived in Halesowen – convinced the BBC to let him create a comedy series for his friend Hancock.

Entitled Vacant Lot, the series focused on life in the faded fictional seaside town of Churdley Bay where the blundering, pompous Hancock aspires to better his lot.

Despite featuring a supporting cast of colourful characters – with Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan among those mooted for roles – the series was never recorded. The scripts have lain buried in the BBC archives for more than six decades, despite their links to Hancock and Goon Show writer, jazz pianist and former Commando Stephens. The

acclaimed writer was to die at the age of 35 in 1959 from a cerebral haemorrhage.

Alex Jackson, booker for Dudley Borough Halls, said: "We are thrilled to be working with the brilliant Birmingham Comedy Festival on this very exciting show, featuring a really wonderful cast." That cast includes impressionist James Hurn from TV's Dead Ringers and Janice Connolly, AKA comedian Mrs Barbara Nice.

Dave Freak, show director, said: "Here we get a rare glimpse of a pre-superstar Hancock, in what would have been his first major leading role." Tickets are available from www.boroughhalls.co.uk or by calling 01384 812812.

Museum is inspiring performers

A NEW set of performances 'Back in 10', produced by Black Country Touring, will be taking place during Black Country Living Museum's Summer Evenings this month using the Tipton Road attraction's shops as a backdrop.

On Fridays five artists will present 10 to 15 minute performances at The Trap Works, J. Wiltshire Pawnbrokers and Gripton's Radio, each week working at a different location within the site.

Performances, including poetry, music and dance, will be created by theatre artist Rochi Rampal, Black Country performance poet Dave Reeves, choreographer Sonia Sabri, and sound and music designer Pavan Chand. Set and costume design will be by Abigail King and overall the performances will be led by director Steve Johnstone of Black Country Touring.

The artists are supported graduates from the University of Wolverhampton, who conducted research to find out what each space provoked in visitors today.

Visitors can expect anything from mechanised soundscapes, the appearance of a genie, a promenade-wander blurring time between the present and the past, and a story from two contrasting worlds.

Back in 10 is the first public-facing project of a four-year partnership between Black Country Touring & Black Country Living Museum. Back in 10 is part of BCLM's Summer Evenings programme which offers £5 entry after 4pm.



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15 Years and Celebrating

Commercial feature

THE Bangla Lounge restaurant is in the heart of Halesowen town centre opposite the church.

The restaurant has been serving quality pan Asian food for the last 15 years.

Originally set up in 2003 by Bari's family the business has gone from strength to strength and this year are celebrating their 15th year anniversary.

As a thank you to all their loyal customers for all their support over the years they are offering 15% discount every Friday & Saturday up to the 11th August and this is both eat in or take away.

Atmosphere and decor

As you enter you are welcomed by magnificent setting and a delightful marriage of classic and luxurious modern – a wonderful comfortable experience.

The menu dishes

The menu offers a wide variety of mouth-watering dishes from red hot Goa to cool Kashmir. On the new 2018 menu, new dishes include South Indian garlic lamb or chicken, Dhabba Murgh, as well as exclusive house specials Tamarind king prawns, chicken makhani and home-made lamb dish. There are plenty of dishes for vegetarians and fish lovers including vegetable jhall, Roson Ki salmon, also any main dish from the menu using Quorn pieces.



Owner and manager Bari Azad is ready to welcome you

The ingredients

All food is made freshly cooked on order and the dishes have the warmth of homemade Indian cooking. The chefs take great care in selecting the best quality ingredients. The restaurant also offers a large selection of wines and beer from around the world.

Healthy eating

At Bangla Lounge, healthy eating is high on the agenda if you prefer to have low calorie version of your favourite dishes prepared, they are able to

specially prepare most dishes using less oil, no butter or ghee-less food colouring resulting in lighter meals.

If you are planning a celebration, the restaurant's upstairs function room can cater for up to 40 guests is ideal for work parties birthday celebrations anniversaries. Takeaways are available and home delivery service for free within a three-mile radius.

To book a table call 01215857020 or email: info@banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk

The restaurant can be found at 67-69 High Street, Halesowen, B63 3BQ.

AT YOUR LEISURE

Bewdley's Becky Hill



The Voice star Becky returns with new single and tour

BEWDLEY singer Becky Hill is having a busy time after releasing her new single Sunrise In The East and the accompanying video, as well as announcing her headline tour for the autumn.

The tour, which takes place throughout October, includes a homecoming date at Birmingham's O2 Institute 2 on October 12.

The 2012 semi-finalist on TV talent show The Voice, where she was

mentored by Jessie J, has revealed her latest single – her first for Polydor Records – was accompanied by a video shot in Vietnam and directed by Michael Holyk, whose previous credits include Jake Bugg, Sam Smith and Sundara Karma.

"Vietnam is one of my favourite places in the world," the 24-year-old former Wyre Forest barmaid said. "To do a video there was a dream come true. With 21-hour days and intense shooting it was also the hardest shoot I've ever had to do."

"The team were amazing, everyone

knew the job they had to do no matter how little sleep we got."

"It's my pleasure to present my brand new video."

Hill wrote the track with Maverick Sabre and Lost Boy. It was produced by ADP and captures the exhilarating flourish of a new relationship and discovering someone on a deeper level.

Sunrise In The East is also the first taste of her material from her forthcoming as-yet-untitled debut album. Tickets for O2 Institute 2 show are priced at £15.

Taj Express delivery from Bollywood to Birmingham

A BOLLYWOOD extravaganza comes to Birmingham following a hit season in the West End and tour of America.

The musical Taj Express will begin a five-night run at the Birmingham Hippodrome on September 11.

The show follows young composer Shankar as he struggles with his music until he begins to follow in the footsteps of his idol, A.R. Rahman and discovers his path to success.

The show blends explosive dance with the hits from India's top composers with a soundtrack featuring the songs of Oscar-winner A.R. Rahman, composer for Danny Boyle's Slumdog Millionaire.

This production, which looks behind the scenes at the world's most prolific film industry, follows the success of The Merchants of

Bollywood and Wah! Wah! Girls. Behind the dance scenes is one of Bollywood's top choreographers Vaibhavi Merchant and her sister Shruti Merchant.

The pair were part of the creative team behind The Merchants of Bollywood, based on the life of their grandfather Shri Hiralalji.

Vaibhavi performed in the film Snehapoorvam Anna. As a choreographer she worked on a variety of acclaimed films, winning a National Film Award for choreographing Dhole baaje in the movie Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. Shruti toured around the world for more than five years with The Merchants of Bollywood and has also assisted in the choreography direction for Bollywood blockbusters. A scene from Taj Express



Rock, blues and reggae with Farmer Phil

Eclectic rural gathering Farmer Phil's Music Festival is being held in Shropshire this weekend at Ratliffhope, near Shrewsbury.

The county's answer to Glastonbury is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year with a diverse range of acts ranging from punk and reggae to folk, blues and cabaret.

Farmer Phil Harding has long held a passion for live music and brings top international musicians to his festival while also encouraging up-and-coming local talent to perform. The 2018 line-up includes reggae hit-makers Aswad, Dr & The Medics, Jilted Generation, Fight The Bear, Shoot The Moon, Quill, Bob Marley tribute Legend, Baba Jack, and the Herbert Spliffington Allstars.

A spokesperson for the event said: "We are a family-friendly music festival complete with on-site camping, two stages featuring over 50 outstanding live acts. Ska, folk, punk, rock 'n' roll, classic rock or dance music, you'll find it all here." Visit www.farmerphilfestival.com for more information.

The Moomins are coming to the MAC

Youngsters are being invited to take a trip to Moominvalley when Lost and Found theatre company present children's show Mischief And Mystery In Moomin Valley.

Featuring the timeless characters created by Scandinavian illustrator Tove Jansson, the story telling experience with puppetry on an ingenious pop-up book set, features original music and is designed to delight four to seven-year-olds.

The show lasts around 45 minutes and will be performed at the MAC Birmingham, in Cannon Hall Park, tomorrow (Friday) at 11am, 2pm and 4pm, then again on Saturday at the same times. The 11am performance on Saturday will feature a British Sign Language interpreter. To book see the macbirmingham.co.uk website or call 0121 446 3232.

Other children's shows coming to the MAC include Chapterhouse Theatre's production of Alice in Wonderland on Thursday, August 16, at 6.30pm. It is described as suitable for all the family.

High standard of food and ales

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, August 9, 2018

The Island Pool is a classic country pub serving not only a high standard of food but great traditional ales.

A spokesman said: "We have to offer, a carvery with a choice freshly roasted meats accompanied by a wide variety of fresh locally sourced vegetables."

"Alongside our carvery, we have an extensive menu with a range of foods to suit any and every palate. We are proud to offer exquisite beef steaks, also sourced locally, and are all cooked to perfection."

"Sumptuous breakfast, tasty lunch and sexy dinners. Stop by for our varied menu and enjoy our farm to table concept."

The pub is open daily between Sunday and Friday, from 12pm and 8pm and Saturday from 12noon to 9pm.

Breakfast is available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 8.30am and 11am.

The spokesman added: "Whether it's brunch, lunch or dinner you're joining us for, call to reserve your table on (01562) 850311."



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CHOICE



Frieda Hughes

Sylvia Plath: Life Inside the Bell Jar (BBC2, 9pm)
Documentary exploring Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical novel, exploring the wider landscape of 1950s gender politics and Plath's own struggles to survive society's constraints. Featuring an interview with the author's daughter Frieda Hughes, who discusses her mother in depth on camera for the first time, as well as impressionistic reconstructions of excerpts from the book featuring readings by Maggie Gyllenhaal, unpublished letters, photographs and archive materials, and contributions from people who knew the writer.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** European Championships 2018. Further live coverage of day 10 of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event from Glasgow and Berlin, featuring diving, golf, and gymnastics. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** European Championships 2018. Gabby Logan presents concluding live coverage of day 10 of the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event from Glasgow and Berlin, featuring diving, triathlon, and athletics. The mixed 10m synchronised and women's 3m springboard finals conclude at Royal Commonwealth Pool, as does the elite team relay triathlon event at Strathclyde Country Park, but the main focus of attention this evening will be in the athletics at Olympiastadion Berlin. The penultimate day of competition consists only of finals, and British interest may lie in the women's long jump and 200m, where Lorraine Ugen and Dina Asher-Smith are expected to be among those competing for medals. Other events scheduled to take place are the women's 400m, men's 800m and 5,000m, as well as the women's and men's 4x400m relay races. **9.10** **Casualty**. New series. Iain visits a patient at home, who has frequently tried to harm herself in the past, but decide she does not need help at the moment – despite the concerns of her boyfriend. However, while driving back to the hospital, he witnesses her attempting suicide by jumping off a bridge – which in turn, causes a major crash putting several lives in danger – including Sam's. **10.00** BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update. **10.20** **Match of the Day**. Gary Lineker presents highlights from the opening matches of the Premier League season, including Wolverhampton Wanderers v Everton and Huddersfield Town v Chelsea. Wolves were one of the three promoted sides in action, hoping that their expensively assembled squad can compete in the top flight. **11.45** **Film: Shanghai Knights**. (2003) Martial arts comedy sequel, with Jackie Chan, Owen Wilson, Aidan Gillen and Fann Wong. **1.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Marrying Mum and Dad. (R) **7.05** Officially Amazing Goes Bunkers. **7.35** The Dengineers. (R) **8.05** Deadly Dinosaurs with Steve Backshall. (R) **8.35** David Attenborough's Natural Curiosities. (R) **9.00** European Championships 2018. **1.15** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **2.15** Garden Rescue. (R) **3.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **3.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.30** European Championships 2018. Continued live coverage of day 10 from Glasgow and Berlin. **5.30** Flog It! (R) **5.50** Inventing the Impossible: The Big Life Fix. (R) **6.50** **Proms Extra**. Katie Derham is joined by guests violinist Joshua Bell, cellist and singer Ayanna Witter-Johnson, and soprano Nadine Benjamin ahead of their Proms performances. **7.30** **Dad's Army**. Mainwaring's men pose as traitors to see how the residents of Walmington-on-Sea would deal with genuine Nazi infiltrators in their midst. (R) **8.00** **Blitz: The Bombs That Changed Britain**. The documentary focuses on wartime Hull and the consequences of a specific bomb that fell on the city's 6th Avenue, flattening two houses and changing the lives of two families for ever. The Taylors lost baby Peter and 14-year-old Vera was very badly burned. Next door, Mrs Owens had put three of her children under the stairs for safety, but they didn't survive. Contributors include Mrs Owens' daughter Janet, who was born after the war and has many questions about what happened to her siblings. Here she meets the surviving Taylor sisters to talk about the event. (R) **9.00** **Sylvia Plath: Life Inside the Bell Jar**. Documentary exploring the semi-autobiographical novel, exploring the wider landscape of 1950s gender politics. Featuring an interview with the author's daughter Frieda Hughes. **10.00** **QI XL**. Extended episode in which Sandi Toksvig invites Lucy Beaumont, Jason Manford, Rhod Gilbert and Alan Davies to answer questions on subjects associated with the North and the Norse. (R) **10.45** **Film: Devdas**. (2002) Gorgeous, epic Oscar-nominated Bollywood musical, starring Shah Rukh Khan. **1.40** Picnic at Hanging Rock. (R) **2.30** **Film: Sylvia**. (2003) **4.20** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball On Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. (R) **11.20** James Martin's American Adventure. (R) **11.50** Eat. Shop. Save. (R) **12.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.20** £10K Holiday Home. (R) **1.50** ITV News; Weather. **2.00** Tenable. (R) **3.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** WWS Wrestling. **6.00** ITV News; Weather. **6.15** **Regional Programme**; Weather. **6.30** **Japandemonium**. A review of the best Japanese TV, featuring a man and a dog competing in an eating contest, the strange world of baby racing, and more from Hole in the Road. Narrated by Melvin Odoom. **7.00** **Big Star's Little Star**. Stephen Mulhern hosts the entertainment show in which the children of Una Foden, Kate Silverton and Kriss Akabusi spill the beans about their famous parents, talking about their home lives, making heart-warming revelations or telling downright embarrassing stories. The contestants are all hoping to win as much money as possible for their chosen charities. **8.00** **Film: The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies**. (2014) Dwarf King Thorin reclaims control of his homeland, but his descent into madness places him on the brink of war with his human and elfen allies. As Thorin's Hobbit friend Bilbo tries to save the tormented ruler from himself, a vast horde of orcs gathers to destroy them all. Conclusion of the fantasy adventure trilogy, starring Martin Freeman, Richard Armitage, Ian McKellen, Luke Evans and Orlando Bloom. **10.35** **ITV News**; Weather. **10.55** **Film: Wanted**. (2008) A man joins a secret society of superpowered assassins that kills people destined to commit acts of evil. Action adventure, starring James McAvoy, Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman. **12.40** Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Eternal Glory. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Triathlon: London. **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.50** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.20** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** The People's Vet. **5.35** Escape to the Chateau: DIY. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News**. **7.00** **A Year in the New Forest**. A look at life in the New Forest in the spring, a challenging time of year for both people and animals. The semi-wild cattle and ponies that live in the forest face giving birth during changeable weather conditions, while the possibility of a late frost puts a goshawk's eggs at risk. **8.00** **My Family and the Galapagos**. Monty Hall's last few weeks on the Galapagos are spent learning more about sharks. He begins by taking his daughter Isla snorkelling with the creatures, then paying a visit to her school to give a talk on the ocean's most dangerous predators. Monty later joins a research expedition travelling 150 miles from human habitation to tag and photograph whale sharks, hoping to acquire valuable information on how to best protect both the sharks of the Galapagos and the oceans in general. The family also learns more about marine iguanas. Last in the series. **9.00** **Film: Eye in the Sky**. (2015) Premiere. Colonel Katherine Powell's mission to wipe out a terrorist cell in Kenya is complicated when a girl enters the blast radius of the intended drone strike. Powell has to decide between sacrificing the girl's life or letting the terrorists flee to carry out more atrocities. Thriller, starring Helen Mirren, Alan Rickman and Aaron Paul. **11.00** **Film: The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2**. (2012) Conclusion of the romantic fantasy series, with Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson. **1.05** The Last Leg. (R) **2.00** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.10** Vet on the Hill. (R) **5.05** Lost and Found. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Chuckle Time with the Chuckle Brothers. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits. (R) **12.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.15** **Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl**. (2003) Swashbuckling fantasy adventure, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom. **5.15** 5 News Update. **5.20** **Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl**. (2003) Concluded. **7.00** **Cricknet on 5**. England v India. Mark Nicholas presents action from the third day of the Second Test in the five-match series, taking place at Lord's. With commentary by Michael Vaughan, Alison Mitchell, Sourav Ganguly, Ebony Rainford-Brent and Charles Dagnall. **7.55** **5 News Weekend**. **8.00** **Blind Date**. Paul O'Grady hosts a revival of the dating show in which a personal trainer and a Blackpool resident must choose between three unseen suitors based on their answers to a series of questions. Plus, last week's couples return from pottery classes and a trip to Morocco to reveal how things went. **9.00** **Gino's Win Your Wish List**. Gino D'Acampo hosts the game show in which a family of five contestants choose their dream prizes, then in pairs answer questions to try to bank the items on their wish list. The Harvey family from Co Antrim hope to win a holiday in Thailand, tickets to London fashion week, a new sofa and a chance to meet Elton John backstage. **10.00** **When Live TV Goes Horribly Wrong**. Memorable on-air hitches, including presenter Sarah Cawood recalling the time The National Lottery Jetset studio was invaded by Fathers for Justice protestors. (R) **12.55** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Britain by Bike with Larry & George Lamb. The father-and-son duo explore Northumberland. (R) **4.00** Autopsy: Philip Seymour Hoffman. Investigating the death of the American actor. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. Ann Maurice visits Maidstone. (R) **5.10** Great Artists. Greek artist El Greco. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Wild Ireland: The Edge of the World
8.00 Wonders of the Moonson **9.00** Cardinal: Blackly Season **10.25** Top of the Pops: 1986 **10.55** Dusty Springfield at the BBC **11.55** You've Got a Friend: The Carole King Story **12.55** Easy Listening Hits at the BBC **1.55** Wild Ireland: The Edge of the World **2.55** Wonders of the Moonson **3.55** Close
ITV2
11.35 Catchphrase **12.20** You've Been Framed! **Gold 1.25** **Film: Step Up Revolution** (2012) **2.35** **Film: Step Up Revolution** (2012) **3.15** **Film: Johnny English Reborn** (2011) **4.15** **FYI Daily** **4.20** **Film: Johnny English Reborn** (2011) **5.20** **Film: Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith** (2005) **6.25** **FYI Daily** **6.30** **Film: Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith** (2005) **8.00** **Film: Creed** (2015) **9.00** **FYI Daily** **9.05** **Film: Creed** (2015) **10.45** Keith Lemon: Coming in America **11.30** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.50** The Cleveland Show **2.55** CelebAbility **2.55** Teleshopping **5.15** **ITV2** Nightscreen **ITV3**
2.45 **Film: That Riviera Touch** (1966) **4.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot **7.00** Lewis **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Vera **1.00** On the Buses **2.00** **ITV3** Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4**
12.45 **ITV Racing: Live** from Ascot. Coverage of today's race meetings at Ascot. Afterday Park and Newmarket. **4.35** **Film: Escape to Victory** (1981) **5.35** **FYI Daily** **5.40** **Film: Escape to Victory** (1981) **7.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **11.00** Better Late Than Never **11.55** River Monsters **12.55** Minder **2.00** The Motorbike Show **2.50** **ITV4** Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**
11.30 Don't Tell the Bride **12.30** **Film: Dr Dolittle** (1998) **2.10** **Rude(ish)** Tube Shorts **2.30** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film: The Inbetweeners Movie** (2011) **11.00** The Inbetweeners **12.10** Gogglebox **2.15** **Rude Tube: Rude Tunes** **3.05** The Inbetweeners **4.05** **Rude Tube** **4.30** **Rude(ish)** Tube **Film4**
11.00 Courage Mountain (1990) **1.00** Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties (2006) **2.35** Never Been Kissed (1999) **4.40** The Choice (2016) **6.55** The Princess Bride (1987) **9.00** Pitch Perfect 2 (2015) **11.15** Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse (2015) **1.05** Danger: Diabolik (1968) **3.15** Close

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

MUSICAL TREATS IN THE NEW WELLINGTON



Musical fans from across the region are rubbing their hands together for a musical extravaganza with Live Entertainment Friday and Saturday Night.

The New Wellington in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, is not only treating its patrons to great entertainment it is also a great place to eat, drink and socialise.

Set on the main Stourbridge to Dudley Road, not far off Brierley Hill high street, the venue offers a carvery all day everyday from 12 noon to 8pm with a selected main menu from 5pm. With Kids eating Free throughout the school holidays. T's & C's apply

For the early started amongst us they also offer a buffet style all you can eat breakfast from 8am to 11am, which has been brought back by popular demand.

The New Wellington also offers a Disco and Karaoke every Friday night, So why not come down and have a sing along!!

New to 2018 - 9 newly refurbished rooms for accommodation, so also now offer B&B at very competitive prices.

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The New Wellington, 383 Brettell Lane,
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CHOICE



Fiona Bruce

Fake or Fortune? (BBC1, 9pm)

New series. Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould examine a still life that may have been painted by prolific artist William Nicholson, but which has been rejected by leading experts on his work. They discover a useful source of evidence in Nicholson's own paint box, but as they delve into the painting's history, they discover it may have been connected to one of the 20th century's greatest art crimes. Fiona meets a reformed forger to discover if he ever faked a Nicholson while Philip takes the painting to Canada to compare it to another of the artist's works.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** Match of the Day. (R) **10.25** Sunday Morning Live. **11.25** Bargain Hunt. (R) **12.25** Songs of Praise. **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** European Championships 2018. Further live coverage of day 11 from Glasgow and Berlin, featuring diving, open water swimming, gymnastics, road cycling, and golf. **5.00** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Countryfile. Matt Baker, Ellie Harrison and Steve Brown present the show from Nottinghamshire, examining efforts to conserve the region's bramble apple trees and rare species of bats. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

6.30 European Championships 2018. Gabby Logan presents concluding coverage of day 11 from Berlin, where the inaugural staging of the multi-sports event draws to a close with the final night of athletics. British middle-distance runners Laura Muir and Eilish McColgan are expected to compete in the respective finals of the women's 1500m and 3,000m steeplechase, while the men's triple jump event also takes place, before the finals of the women's and men's 4x100m relay races provide an exciting climax to the competition.

9.00 Fake or Fortune? New series. Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould examine a still life that may have been painted by William Nicholson, but could be from one of the 20th century's greatest art crimes.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's three Premier League matches, featuring Arsenal v Manchester City at the Emirates Stadium, Liverpool v West Ham United at Anfield and Southampton v Burnley at the St Mary's Stadium. A new post-Arsene Wenger era began for Arsenal with the toughest of tests against last season's champions, while the Hammers were also looking for a surprise victory under new manager Manuel Pellegrini.

11.35 The Truth About Getting Fit. Michael Mosley and a team of scientists investigate some of the easiest and most effective ways to get the biggest benefits of exercise. (R)

12.35 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Gardeners' World. (R) **7.05** Countryfile. (R) **8.00** European Championships 2018. **1.15** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **2.15** The Mating Game - Natural World Special. (R) **3.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.00** European Championships 2018. Continued live coverage of day 11 from Glasgow and Berlin.

6.30 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing. Paul and Bob fish the river Wensley in Norfolk for Roach, and decide to challenge each other to a fishing competition where the winner gets a very special culinary treat. (R)

7.00 Inside the Factory. Gregg Wallace explores the North Yorkshire factory that produces 625,000 sausages a day, and Cherry Heale is at the University of Chester, getting the scientific lowdown on the best bangers. Plus, Ruth Goodman investigates how a German bratwurst became so popular in America. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. New series. Entrepreneurs Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman, Tej Lalvani and Jenny Campbell assess more unusual business ideas, including a shocking display from the owner of a live anatomy dissection business and a new model of tuk-tuk that turns out to have a fatal flaw. The final presentation is for a singer-for-hire scheme, which prompts the panel to show off their own musical talents.

9.00 Travels in Trumpland with Ed Balls. Ed Balls discovers who benefits financially from Trump's presidency, paying a visit to his private members' club, where a party is being held to mark the first anniversary of the election victory. He also meets a controversial pastor who believes prayer can lead to wealth and a musician attempting to fuse country music and rap. Finally, Ed attends a Tea Party convention, to share with those in attendance what he has learned. Last in the series.

10.00 Lost Boys?: What's Going Wrong for Asian Men. Reporter Mehreen Balg reports on the challenges facing Asian men growing up in modern Britain.

11.00 Film: Kings of Curry. (2013) **12.20** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.15** Holby City. (R) **2.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Make It Pop. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Possession. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Japandemonium. (R) **9.50** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **10.50** WOS Wrestling. (R) **11.50** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **12.50** ITV News; Weather. **1.00** Paul O'Grady's Little Heroes. (R) **1.30** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. (R) **2.30** The Chase. (R) **3.30** Film: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. (2001) Fantasy adventure, starring Elijah Wood.

6.40 ITV News; Weather.

6.50 Regional Programme; Weather.

7.00 Midsomer Murders. At the Luxton Deeping Crime Festival, the unveiling of a newly discovered novel by deceased Midsomer crime writer George Summersbee is jeopardised when the manuscript is stolen and local artist Suzie Colebrooke is electrocuted by a booby-trapped roulette wheel. Can new father Barnaby untangle a web of jealousy and obsession to find the killer? With Fiona Dolman, Tamzin Malletson, Liberty Mills, Una Stubbs and Georgia Taylor. (R)

9.00 Forgotten. James, Tim and Chris are exposed as having lied about their whereabouts on the night Hayley died. Pete reveals that he saw Eliot climbing into the holiday home through a window on New Year's Day, while leaves James struggling with the possibility that his son may have killed Hayley. Fran cracks a code in the dead girl's diary, suggesting that she met a local drug dealer on the night she disappeared.

10.05 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Carry On Forever. June Whitfield and Sally Geeson recall how Carry On Abroad was filmed much closer to home than the cast had hoped and Patrick Mower reflects on Carry On England. Last in the series. (R)

11.20 Tonight at the Palladium. Variety show from the West End theatre, featuring some of the UK's best-loved comedians and entertainers. (R)

12.10 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Motorsport UK. (R) **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **6.05** Mobil 1: The Grid. **6.30** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Peng Life. (R) **2.00** Film: Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules. (2011) Children's comedy sequel, starring Zachary Gordon. **4.00** Location. Location. Location. (R) **5.00** A Place in the Sun. **5.30** Homes by the Sea. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Flying Across Britain with Arthur Williams. Arthur explores the South East by plane, discovering the dangers of flying through London's crowded airspace and visiting the birthplace of British aviation on the North Kent coast. He also follows the course of the M25 to Cardington Sheds, home of the world's biggest aircraft and takes a spitfire for a spin in Biggin Hill.

8.00 Hidden Britain by Drone. Tony Robinson presents aerial footage of more inaccessible parts of the UK, sending drones to explore a chain of sea forts that were once a lair for pirates, a top-secret underground Cold War bunker, the inner workings of a sewage plant and a vast luxury car emporium.

9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. Serena Joy and the other wives strive to make change. Emily learns more about her new Commander, and Offred faces a difficult decision. Last in the series.

10.20 Mama's Angel. Israeli mystery thriller, starring Sharon Stark as a prison therapist who has to treat a child murderer at the same time as she is dealing with the disappearance of her son. Full series available online.

11.15 First Dates. Dapper Will is looking for a woman to share his love of the countryside, but he has never had a girlfriend and is not a natural when it comes to chatting up a lady. (R)

12.15 Film: Fruitvale Station. (2013) Fact-based drama, starring Michael B Jordan. **1.45** Film: Soutan. (2016) Greek drama, starring Makis Papadimitriou. **3.30** Vet on the Hill. Scott tries to help a Spanish rescue cat with a chronic eye condition. (R) **4.25** Lost and Found. (R) **5.20** The Posh Frock Shop. (R) **5.45** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.45** Only the Little White Van. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas and Friends: Extraordinary Engines. (R) **7.30** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.45** Rusty Rivets. (R) **8.00** Paw Patrol. **8.15** Pirata & Capitano. **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Floogals. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Access. **10.35** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.15** Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords: Disturbing the Peace. (R) **4.15** Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords. (R) **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)

6.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Agents chase more than £1,700 in unpaid parking fines in south-east London, and in north Wales, officers try to recover £2,000 owed by a tradesman to a former employer. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v India. Action from the fourth day of the Second Test in the five-match series, taking place at Lord's.

7.50 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Captain Jack Sparrow battles to save his soul from the legendary Davy Jones and his fearsome sea monster. Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.

9.15 5 News Update.

9.20 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Concluded.

10.55 Film: The Expendables 2. (2012) The mercenary team battles a rival band of hired guns who have killed one of their number. Action thriller sequel, starring Sylvester Stallone and Jean-Claude Van Damme.

11.55 Access. Showbiz news and gossip. **12.00** Film: The Expendables 2. (2012) Concluded. **12.50** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Britain's Parking Hell. (R) **4.00** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms 2018 **8.45** BBC Proms Encores **9.00** The Stolen Maharajah: Britain's Indian Royal **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** Mission to Mars: A Horizon Special **11.30** The Comet's Tale **12.30** Timeshift - Flights of Fancy: Pigeons and the British **1.30** Arena: American Epic **2.30** The Stolen Maharajah: Britain's Indian Royal **3.30** Close

ITV2

12.30 Ninja Warrior UK **1.30** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.25** Film: The Smurfs (2011) **3.25** FYI Daily **3.30** Film: The Smurfs (2011) **4.30** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **6.35** Film: Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977) **7.35** FYI Daily **7.40** Film: Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977) **9.00** Film: Skyfall (2012) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10** Film: Skyfall (2012) **11.55** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.45** Ghosted **2.15** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3

12.50 Rosemary & Thyme **3.55** Victoria **6.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **8.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **10.00** The Halcyon **12.05** Wire in the Blood **1.55** Blue Murder **3.40** Road to Avonlea **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

5.45 Silverstone Classic **6.45** Football Rivalries **7.10** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **11.10** Film: Assault on Precinct 13 (2005) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10** Film: Assault on Precinct 13 (2005) **1.10** BRDC Formula 3 Highlights **2.10** The Protectors **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.15 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.10** Young Sheldon **2.10** The Big Bang Theory **6.40** Film: Iron Man 2 (2010) **9.00** Fear the Walking Dead **10.25** Gogglebox **11.30** The Big Bang Theory **12.25** Ride Tube **2.00** Fear the Walking Dead **3.15** Holyoaks

Film4

11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) **1.00** My Neighbour Totoro (1988) **2.45** Flight of the Navigator (1986) **4.30** Eragon (2006) **6.35** The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2011) **9.00** X-Men: Days of Future Past (2014) Wolverine is sent back in time to change history and prevent a war that has devastated the world. Superhero adventure sequel, starring Hugh Jackman and Jennifer Lawrence. **11.35** The Counsellor (2013) Ridley Scott's crime thriller, starring Michael Fassbender. **1.55** Radiator (2014) **3.50** Close

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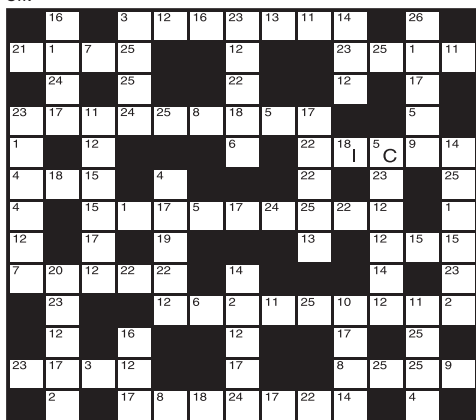
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BRAIN GYM

No.492

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
T	Y	E	P	D	X	S	G	K	C	O	H	V
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
L	B	Z	N	F	J	U	Q	M	A	I	W	R

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues – both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Old boy with the only perfume going out of date (11)
- 'A car' I am to translate into this language (7)
- Say it was the fault of Mabel (5)
- A supporter of painting (5)
- Take the lead, but give up beforehand, apparently (7)
- Not in good voice ashore (6)
- Rot got into cave (6)
- Student is one who gets a pound in wages (7)
- Kingdom holds 1000 who are genuine (5)
- Hoary poet? (5)
- Not huge, but we can make it stronger (7)
- Chief let this out to come top (4,3,4)

Down

- They are spilt indiscreetly (5)
- Mysterious pronouncements which could be so clear (7)
- Get away from two points on the headland (6)
- 100 with the ability to send a telegram (5)
- Eastern, yet could not be closer (7)
- How the hitch-hiker can make sure to get up? (4,3,4)
- Growth in the photographic industry? (11)
- Do a meal stylishly (1,2,4)
- Seen in mirror qualms felt about whale (7)
- A lame supporter (6)
- Famous? Edward? You must be joking! (5)
- The result of burning trees? (5)



Quick Clues:

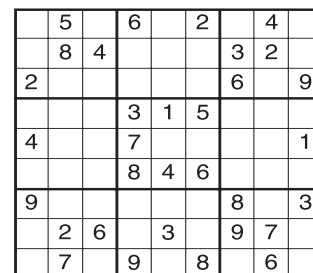
Across

- Absolutely sure (4,7)
- Self-centred person (7)
- Prise (5)
- Obvious (5)
- Title (7)
- Firm (6)
- Turn back (6)
- Insignia (7)
- Tribal emblem (5)
- Trail (5)
- Include (7)
- Irish dramatist (7,4)

Down

- Wear away (5)
- Wandered (7)
- Tempt (6)
- A flower (5)
- Bill (7)
- Show (11)
- Recall (5,2,4)
- Inscribe (7)
- Stretches (7)
- Cavalryman (7)
- Compare (5)
- Headdress (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	7	6	3	5	4	2	9	1
3	1	2	9	6	8	4	7	5
9	5	4	7	2	1	6	3	8
5	3	8	1	9	6	7	2	4
2	4	9	8	3	7	1	5	6
1	6	7	5	4	2	3	8	9
7	2	1	6	8	5	9	4	3
6	8	3	4	7	9	5	1	2
4	9	5	2	1	3	8	6	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Spotless; 5 Talc; 9 Form; 10 Ironside; 11 Voile; 12 Wrought; 13 Sedge-warblers; 18 Torments; 19 Away; 20 Evil-eye; 21 Choir; 22 Sign; 23 Asperity.
Down: 2 Promote; 3 Time-lag; 4 Straw mattress; 6 Atinge; 7 Creates; 8 Entomb; 13 Setters; 14 Darling; 15 Eleven; 16 Leather; 17 Realist.
QUICK - Across: 1 Sanctify; 5 Pomp; 9 Plan; 10 Practice; 11 Debar; 12 Edifice; 13 State of unrest; 18 Amicable; 19 Feast; 20 Diocese; 21 Vague; 22 Leer; 23 Assented.
Down: 2 Ailment; 3 Contact; 4 Forgetfulness; 6 Orifice; 7 Present; 8 Action; 13 Scandal; 14 Adipose; 15 Eraser; 16 Refrain; 17 Statute.

Quiz

- On which Hebridean island did Prince Charles overshoot the runway on landing in 1994?
- Where is the St. Leger run?
- Of which gland is a goitre an enlargement?
- How many Inns of Court are there in England?
- In biology, what is a group of families called?
- What is the Peak District's highest point?
- Of what animal are mississippiensis and sinensis the two varieties?
- Which novelist created Svengali?
- Which king converted Leeds Castle to a palace?
- On silverware, what do the letters EPNS stand for?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Isotherm; 2 Philistines; 3 Campania; 4 Macrame; 5 Billie Holiday; 6 Oleg Salenko; 7 Thursday; 8 South Africa; 9 Switzerland; 10 Frances Hodgson Burnett.

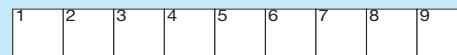
Niner: INDECORUM

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

96384
65716
93278

gives a raid,
gives a burglary,
gives an alarm.



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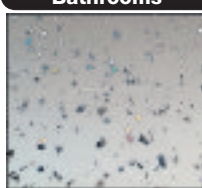
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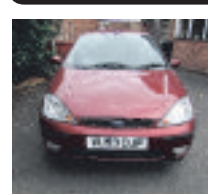
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Lee Hendrie alongside Alan Wright, Gareth Barry, George Boateng, Ian Taylor, Mark Delaney, and Ugo Ehiogu



Lee Hendrie gives youngsters a chance to get back into the game



Lee Hendrie knows the highs and lows of football



Looking back – Lee Hendrie alongside Gareth Barry

Hendrie helps lead way – in or out of football

SPORTING FEATURE

By Luke Hatfield

HE made 271 appearances for Villa, scoring 27 goals along the way – but now Lee Hendrie is giving something back to the game, and the club, which gave him so much.

Making his first-team debut for the club he supported as a boy, it was far from a dream start for the then 18-year-old who earned himself a sending off during a 1-0 defeat to QPR in December 1995.

Fast forward two decades and it's experiences like that which give him hope that he can be the ideal role model to the youth now dreaming of doing exactly what he did as a fresh-faced midfielder.

Joining fellow former Villa youth player Ryan Amoo, the 41-year-old set-up the Lee Hendrie Academy three years ago, which aims to help young footballers find a way back into the game which so often chews up and spits out thousands of kids each year.

He understands that it's the 'love' of the game which keeps kids coming back to a sport which is renowned for putting the best on a pedestal, while seemingly forgetting those who never quite achieved the same acclaim.

Buzz

"I love football and I always want to be involved in football so, I like to watch football, I like to talk about football, I like to coach football," he beams.

It's safe to say the buzz of scoring goals and crunching tackles is still strong, even if he's not the one doing it.

"Every avenue that I can give something back to the game, that's what I've took on-board," he adds. "I set up the Academy just to help a few of these youngsters get on their feet."

"Some of the lads are potentially not going to get into a football club but some of these lads leave school at 16, and where do they go from there?"

It's a great question. For every Lee Hendrie in the world, there are countless players who never quite made it. Those, who for one reason or another, didn't get offered a professional contract. Where do they go? Often they end up playing back at a grassroots level, far away from the bright lights of the Premier League, looking for the next chance to showcase their

"If I see potential in someone I'll try and get them into a football club so they can get back on the ladder"

talents to someone who might be able to give them a chance to play the sport they love for a living.

Plenty consider it the end of their dream, but Hendrie doesn't think that should be the case.

"I just think there's so much avenue for youngsters to get back into the game," he insists. "My ideal opportunity is that we get a very good foundation of young players that have maybe been released from football clubs, and it gives them another way of trying to get back into football, because certain kids at 16 get released from clubs and they think it's finished and it's over, but it's not."

"If I see potential in someone I'll certainly try and get them into a football club so they can get back on the ladder and try and prove a point to clubs."

What has helped for Hendrie, Amoo and those kids who have become a part of their academy set-up, is the former midfielder's links with the biggest club in the Midlands.

Recently creating a link with the Aston Villa Foundation, academy members now have a true pathway into professional football – and one willing to provide a chance to youth. Jack Grealish, Andre Green, Marc Albrighton, Gabriel Agbonlahor and even Gary Cahill are notable products of Villa's youth system who followed Hendrie.

All of those aforementioned players played first-team football at Villa Park, and while he understands that won't be the case for all of those under his wing, the one-time England international wants to give them all that chance.

"This will be our fourth year coming around," he said. "Having that link with Villa now is extra spe-

cial because we can take the lads up and play friendly games at Bodmoor Heath. There have been a couple of lads we've sent in on-trial, there's plenty of potential players out there in grassroots football that don't get the opportunity to prove themselves or approach a professional club. I've sent a few lads down to Villa and they've been playing with the under-23s and been on three or four-week trials.

"I'd like it to be (a feeder for Villa). We run alongside Villa and their foundation, it's not the academy that they have at Bodmoor Heath every day."

"But Villa have done the foundation side of it where they're talking to the grassroots kids and you know they're going to get a lot of kids come through that system. Having that tie with them and being associated with them, it's a key factor for us that they can have a feel of actually going in and playing at Bodmoor Heath and maybe getting themselves a trial if they're good enough to get put forward."

"It's been a great connection, having that with the club itself."

"We do the soccer camps that are really good, we've taken four or five lads, eight, nine, 10-year-olds that have signed for Villa which has been a great advert for what we do."

Contrast

It's a long slog from the youth processes of old, when prospects wouldn't be showered with cash and have clubs deciding their every move.

Nowadays promising stars are earning countless sums before they've even kicked a ball. It's a huge contrast to the days of cleaning senior players' boots after a matchday.

"Me and Ryan came through the youth system ourselves, the old one where we did the boot cleaning and I think these days it's just a matter of giving these kids some guidance on where we might have gone wrong and might have made the wrong decisions," adds Hendrie.

"The main thing for me is learning a lot of respect. Sometimes these young kids get knocked for not having respect for people, and it's respecting the game as well as people. We're pretty hard on the lads because we want to get the best out of these kids. I've been through tough times myself and I've had to dig deep, and at the same time I've been at the top."

Boxing heroes hit bar for sporting dinner

BOXING fans have the chance to meet Barry McGuigan and Ray Mancini at a sporting dinner taking place in Cannock next month.

The duo will appear at Bar Sport's Premier Suite in High Green, on Saturday, September 15.

McGuigan, nicknamed The Clones Cyclone, is a former WBA featherweight world champion and won a gold medal at the 1978 Commonwealth Games. He is now a successful boxing promoter and the president of the Professional Boxing Association.

American Mancini, nicknamed Boom Boom, competed from 1979-92.

He held the WBA lightweight title from 1982 to 1984 and has also worked as an actor after hanging up his gloves. His father, Lenny Mancini, was also a successful boxer.

For more information or to book tickets for the sporting dinner call Bar Sport in Cannock on 01543 572092 or 01543 503859 or visit <https://www.facebook.com/Barsportcannock> for more details and prices.

Archie rewrites record books with a triple ton

TEENAGE cricket ace Archie O'Hara rewrote the record books as he smashed a superb triple century for Staffordshire under-17s.

O'Hara, who plays club cricket for Wolverhampton, blasted an unbeaten 306 in his side's draw with Northamptonshire at Holcot.

The 17-year-old opener's score was a new county record, while his second wicket partnership with Dan Grounds was the highest-ever recorded in a Staffordshire under-17 match.

O'Hara's innings of 449 balls included 37 fours and a six and helped Staffordshire to amass a total of 570-7 declared.

Delighted coach Jamie Turner said: "It was a brilliant innings to watch."

"Archie is a quality player who is naturally aggressive. In this instance, he showed a great deal of patience and he didn't give up a chance from the first ball to the last. His partnership with Dan was crucial."

"For such a young player he showed a huge amount of maturity. It was very impressive."

League earns the Respect of judges

THE Stourbridge & District Football League has picked up the Respect Award at inaugural The FA and McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards.

The league was one of the 13 different category winners, picked from more than 2,900 nominations.

The awards recognise and celebrate the work of individuals and groups to instill The FA's PRIDE values – Progressive, Respectful, Inclusive, Determined and Excellent – whilst making a positive difference in their club, league or local community.

The FA worked alongside respective County FAs to select local winners. The regional list of recipients was deliberated upon by a panel at Wembley and the winners recognised and celebrated at Sunday's Community Shield.

Nathan French, the FA's National Respect Project Manager, said: "The FA and McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards capture the essence of all that is good about football, and give national recognition to excellent work that might otherwise go under the radar."



Halesowen ready for last big push

HALESOWEN drop one place to fourth after they held on for a losing draw against Bridgnorth, who closed on 266 for four, which included a solid century from Ryan Lockley (104). Opening batsman Ian Gregory began the innings with 54 to lay the platform for a target that proved beyond Halesowen, who finished on 225 for eight.

Masharraf Shazad scored 103 from 144 balls but Hales were never in the hunt after Adam Quiney (4 for 49) took two early wickets.

Division One leaders Kidderminster are 47 points clear at the top of the table after closest challengers Shifnal hung on for a draw. However only 15 points separate Shifnal from eighth placed Bridgnorth and any of the seven clubs behind Kidderminster could clinch the second promotion place if they come up with a decent run in the 50 over format.

Captain Alexei Kervezee said: "We were not at our best and the change to the win/lose format next week might just suit us during the run-in to the end of the season."

"That said, we are a dangerous side who have key performers popping up with match changing contributions and again we saw that in Mushy (Masharraf Shazad). Promoted to number three again he showed his talent with the bat and held us together in a run chase that was just too much for us."

"To be fourth with seven games left is a nice spot to be in. It's tight at the top and any slip ups could be costly but we are positioned well. We just have to win those mini battles in the coming weeks."

Second

The second team have slipped to third after defeat at Coventry and North Warwick. Bating first they conjured up a working total of 191 with contributions from Williams (38) and Hutchinson (37). But they were undone by veteran spinner Mark Lilley. Having reduced Coventry to 127-7 the game looked like it was there for the taking but Cook (54*) had other ideas as Coventry squeezed home by three wickets with overs to spare. Off spinner Greening with 4-63 was the leading bowler.

The third team march on with another victory, this time over Claverley. Callum Gutteridge's 4-47 followed by 80* from Jonty Preece saw the third placed team off as Hales chased down 216 to win by four wickets. The fourth team continued their improved form, also beating Claverley. After Ciaran Baker-Smith's incredible figures of 4-5 including a hat trick, Amardeep Singh (74*) and Vinny OGrady (54*) knocked off the Claverley total of 144 to take them well out of the bottom two.

Meanwhile, Himley held on against Bromsgrove but are not clear of the drop zone. Jayden Levitt (57) and Ryan Pedley (45) led the way with a second wicket stand of 107 for Bromsgrove, who ended on 232-8, with veteran seamer Chris Boroughs taking 4-64. Himley needed a defiant 43 from 85 balls from Arunveer Bhogal to end on 147-8.

Joshua in a New York state of mind



Joshua Jones to play for a US college soccer team

A PLAYER from Dudley College Football Academy will be heading to the USA later this summer to take up a prestigious football opportunity.

Joshua Jones, of Brierley Hill, will be joining Genesee Community College located in Batavia, New York State, this month to study and play for the Cougars soccer team.

Joshua will have the opportunity to combine university studies with playing high level football and training full time for the next four years.

The opportunity has been facilitated through

the assistance of PASS4Soccer Scholarships. Joshua is delighted to have secured a soccer scholarship through the PASS4 network. The opportunity is in recognition of both academic achievements and athletic ability.

Joshua took part in the PASS4Soccer USA Coach Showcase in December 2017 and a US Tour to Charlotte, North Carolina, in March.

Genesee Community College became National Junior College Athletic Association Champions in 2017.

HAMMER TIME FOR HEATHENS

CRADLEY'S Golden Hammer individual event at Wolverhampton on Monday is too close to call.

That's the view of Heathens co-promoter Nigel Pearson with a bumper crowd expected at Monmore Green on August 13.

But Pearson has singled out Drew Kemp, the 15-year-old sensation who has dazzled crowds up and down the country with his stunning scores, as a potential winner.

"Why not Drew?" said Pearson. "I see a lot of speedway throughout Europe and this kid has got something special."

"It's a great line-up for the Hammer, Gary Patchett and Will Pottinger have once again done a great job and it will be a keenly competitive meeting."

"People talk about Robert Lambert and the great success he's had this season as the new British sensation but I also feel Drew will be in the same bracket in two or three years - along with another Heathens favourite Jason Edwards."

Contention

"It's been great to have these lads with Cradley this season and I'm sure they will be in contention on Monday."

Pearson has also sung the praises of former favourite Max Clegg, who is now riding for Stoke.

"Max had a great time riding for us, we took him as a young kid from Scunthorpe and all we did was win trophies with him in the side," he said.

"So it's great to have him in the Hammer field along with another former favourite Danny Ayres, who would dearly love to win the meeting and celebrate in style! The sport needs characters like Danny."

Children are admitted free for the event and there will be a collection on behalf of Dudley Stroke Association during the interval.



Drew Kemp in track action - the 15-year-old is tipped for speedway stardom by Nigel Pearson

Cradley scrape in by the narrowest margin

BIRMINGHAM went agonisingly close to a shock win over favourites Cradley in a Perry Barr thriller.

Despite missing key riders through injury and Cradley packing their side with big hitters, the Brummies gave their bitter rivals a real scare in front of the biggest crowd of the season.

But a 45-45 draw means Heathens will meet Mildenhall in the National Trophy Final.

Tom Bacon and James Shanes took the battle to the visitors with a string of impressive wins. But the Heathens' recently-signed reserves dominated with a 5-1 from Taylor Hampshire and Richard Andrews in Heat 2 putting them ahead.

Jason Edwards crucially snatched third place from Dan Greenwood in both Heats 3 and 5 which left the Brummies facing an eight-point deficit.

Bacon and Shanes both completed maximums in the last heat with Ellis Perks coming to grief, and the draw took the Heathens into the Trophy final by the narrowest margin

Honda's Neal aiming to Rock' leaders

STOURBRIDGE racer Matt Neal hopes to pick up from where he left off when the British Touring Car Championship resumes this weekend at the tricky Rockingham Circuit.

Neal's momentous victory in the first-of-its-kind 'Double Diamond' 60-mile race at Snetterton - held in honour of the BTCC's 60th anniversary celebrations - signalled his and the Team Dynamics-backed Honda squad's second victory of the season. The maximum double-weighted points reward has also spurred him towards the summit of the championship standings.

With four rounds remaining, Honda heads to Rockingham with Neal sitting third in the drivers' table - 16 points shy of the top spot - while Honda is second and closing on BMW in the manufacturers' reckoning.

He cannot wait to race at Rockingham. It is a circuit that suits a balanced all-round package, which Neal says should favour his Civic Type R.

He said: "It was a truly special feeling to make BTCC history at Snetterton. While we're all certainly still buzzing, we are nonetheless focused on the rounds ahead, beginning with Rockingham, a track I had the honour of claiming victory at on the BTCC's inaugural visit back in 2003. It'll be tough to replicate that feat considering the success ballast I'll be carrying but we have tested there this year and the Honda has all the attributes needed to perform well at Rockingham."

Hall or nothing on the hill in Guernsey

KIDDERMINSTER'S Trevor Willis is on course to retain his British Hill Climbing championship after collecting two more wins in the Channel Isles.

The series took in two races in Jersey and Guernsey with Willis bagging a double victory at the Bouley Bay venue while his nearest rival, Brierley Hill's Will Hall, suffered a broken gearbox on the start line of his first run.

Mechanics repaired the damage in time for the Guernsey races on the closed public road in St Peter Port and Hall bounced back in style to claim a first and second to keep his fading title hopes alive.

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